FIVE

Catholick Letters CONCERNING

The Means of knowing with Absolute

Certainty, what Faith, now held

was taught by Christ.

Written by J. Sergeant.

Upon occasion of a Conference between Dr Stillingfleet, & Mr. Pater Gooden.

Lamb in High-Holborn. 1688.



A

LETTER

Will: To the D. of P. Jowler.

ANSWER

TO THE

Arguing Part

OF HIS

FIRST LETTER

To Mr. G. odden

by pro Sorgeant

Publiched with allowance.

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LONDON,

Printed by Henry Hills, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, for His Houshold and Chappel. 1687. H will to do in of the fatter. MA H H-

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sing of your Church by it, and relowed to continue in it.

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To the D. of P.

In Answer to the Arguing Part of his First Letter.

HAT you may not take it unkindly the Arguing Part of your Letter to Mr. G. should pass unregarded, I have been prevail'd upon to accept of his Commission to hold his Cards, while he is not in Circumstances to play out his Game himfelf. But can assure you beforehand, since Matter of Fast is clearing by other Hands more proper, I mean to confine my self to Matter of Right; and so shall give you the least and most excusable trouble that can be, a short one.

2. Your Letter tells us, that the Conference was for the sake of a Gentleman, who I heard desir'd to be satisfi'd that *Protestants* are absolutely certain of what they believe, and made account you could satisfie him, and profess'd, if you could not, he would quit your Communion. And you take care to inform us (p. 2.) that he was satisfi'd, and declar'd immediately after the

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Confe-

Conference, that be was much more confirm'd in the Communion of your Church by it, and refolv'd to continue in it. But could you not have afforded to inform us likewife by what he was fatisfi'd? For there is many a Man who would be as glad, and is as much concern'd to be fatisfi'd in that Point as that Geotleman; and he would not have been a jot the less confirm'd or the less refolv'd, if his Neighbor had been confirm'd and refolv'd with him. I cannot for my life imagin why you should make a Secret of a thing, which, besides your own and your Churches Honor, concerns the Salvation of thou-

fands and thousands to know.

7. Your Letter I perceive would shift it off to Mr. G. whom you defire (p.7.) to prove that Protestants have no Abfolute Certainty, &c. Of this Proposal there will be occasion to say more by and by. At the present I pray you consider how you deal with those Souls who zely on you. If you should move them to trust their Estates with a Man of your naming, of whom you would give no other fatisfaction that he were able to manage them, and faithful, and responsible, but only to bid thole who doubted, prove the contrary; I fancy there would need all the Credit you have to hinder the Motion from appearing very strange: And yet you have the confidence to make them one as much Itranger as their Souls are more worth than their Mony : For you would have them hazard their Souls where they are not fafe, for any care you take to fatisfie them that they are. Why, suppose Mr. G. could not prove that Protestants are not Certain, are they therefore Certain? Has Peter Twenty pounds in his Purse, because Paul cannot prove he has not? Or, ever the more. Title to an Estate, because an Adversary may have the ill luck to be Non-fuited? Must not every body speak for himfelf

felf one day, and bring in his own Account, which will pass or not pass as it is or is not faulty in it felf, whether any fault have been found in it before or no? And will not the Happiness or Midery of their Souls for ever depend on that Account? Can you fuffer them to run that terrible hazard, without making them able to juflife their Accounts themselves, and furnishing them. with affurance that they can, and with no more to fay but that they hop'd Dr. St. would make his Party good with Mr. G. ? That things so precious to God as Souls should be of no more value with those who set up for Ministers of the Gospel! That their great and only care, as far as I fee, should be to make a shew, and pass for fome body here, let every one take his chance hereafter ! Befides. Truth is therefore Truth, because 'ris. built on Intrinsecal Grounds which prove it to be fuch; and not on private Mens Abilities, or their faying this. or that; wherefore till those Grounds be produc'd, it cannot be with reason held Truth: And Dr. St. is more particularly oblig'd to make good he has fuch Grounds. having had fuch ill fortune formerly with the Principles to which he undertook to reduce Protestant Faieb. as appears by the Account given of them in Error Nonpluft.

4. But, leaving these Matters to be Answer'd where we must all answer why we have believ'd so and so; pray let us have fair play in the mean time. Let every one bear his own Burthen, and you not think to discharge your self by throwing your Load on another Man's Shoulders. You affirm there is Absolute Certainty on the Protestants side and 'tis for him to prote it who affirm it. If you do it but half so well as Mr. G. can, and has, the Infallibility which he afferts, you will carn Thanks from one side, and Admiration from the

other.

other. But it is for you to do it : To trick of proving the contrary upon your Adversary, is to own that Proving is a thing which agrees not with your Constitu-

tion, and in which your Heart milgives you.

5. Yet even so you were uneasie still, and would not venture what Mr. G. could do, as flightly as you think, or would have others think of him. You know well enough, that to prove Protestants have no Absolute Certainty of their Faith, is no hard Task even for a weak Dr Tillotfon's Man: You know any Man may find it confess'd to his hand by Protestants. And therefore you had reason to bethink your felf of an Expedient to trick it off again from that Point, and put Mr. G. to prove, That Prote-Stants have no Absolute Certainty as to the Rule of their Faith, viz. the Scripture. The Merits of this Cause too I think will return hereafter more fitly; in this place I

Letter, p. 14.

Rule of Fairb,

P. 117, 118.

Dr. St's Second mind only the Art. Pray, was not the very First Question at the Conference, Whether Protestants are absolutely Certain that they hold now the fame Tenets in Faith, and All that our Savicur taught to his Apostles? And your Answer that They are? Did our Saviour teach, and do Protestants believe no more, than that the Book so call'd is Scripture? Is Certainty of this more, and Certainty of this Book all one? And was not the Question plainly of the Certainty of this, and of All this more? Here is then an Enquiry after one thing plainly turn'd off to another. Yes; but this was one of the two things which the whole Conference depended upon. As if the whole Conference did not depend on that thing which was to be made manifest by the Conference, viz. the sholute Certainty of Protestant Faith. Mr. G. indeed did himself ask some Questions about your Certainty of your Rule; Questions, whole course it was wifely done to cut off, before

they had question'd away your Certainty of Faith. For.

after they had caus'd it to be admitted, that the Certainty of Scripture is from Tradition, there was no refusing to admit that Tradition causes Certainty, and makes Faith as Certain as Scripture. And then it would have prov'd fomething difficult to fatisfie even a willing Man, that the Faith is Certain which is oppofit to a Faith come down by Tradition. But it was feen whereto it would come, and thought fit to break off in time, and not let the Conference proceed too far. In the mean time Absolute Certainty of Scripture was not the Point of the Conference, nor is it the Point of Concern. Besides that 'tis agreed on all hands, Men are Sav'd by Believing and Practifing what Christ taught, not barely by believing Scripture is Scripture: And Salvation is the thing that imports us in these Disputes, and 'twere well that nothing else were minded by Disputers. But it imported you it feems both to shift off Proving from your felf, and to stifle any further Talk of the Certainty of Protestant Faith, and keep us from looking that way by fixing our Eyes on another Object. And this is all you do; but with fo much Art, that I verily think many a Reader is persuaded you are talking all the while to the purpole. The truth is, you have reason: to carry it as you do; for it is good to avoid undertaking what cannot be perform'd: And you cannot, and I believe know you cannot make out, That Protestants. are Absolutely Certain, that they now hold all the same Doctrin that was taught by Christ and his Apostles, as you affirm'd in your Answer to Mr. G's first Question. And this I thought it imported to tell you plainly and publickly, that it might be in your hands to pin the Controversie-basket, and bring all Catholics to your Church; where I will answer you will be sure to find us, if you make us fure we shall find this Certainty there when we come: 6. In

dy as much as hould be done? It is plain, that where Churches differ in Faith. Infallible Faith in one, cannot fland with Ortain Facth in his own Church, he has remov'd Certainty from all that differ from her. Let us then take and fitt Mr. G's Argument, even as you put it, who had not, I suppose, partiality enough for him, to make it better than it was. You put it thus, p. 4, 5.

7. All Traditionary Christians believe the same to day which they did yesterday, and so up to the time of our Blessell Saviour; and if they follow this Rule, they can never err in Faith, therefore are Infallible. And you (Mr. G.) prov'd they could not innovate in Faith, unless they did forget what they held the day before, or out of malice after

it. And now,

That there may be no mistake, let us take each Pro-

polition by it felf.

8. The First is, [All Traditionary Christians believe the same to day which they did yesterday, and so up to the time of our Blessed Saviour.] You have nothing to say to this, I hope: For since Traditionary Christians are those who proceed upon Tradition, and Tradition signifies Immediate Delivery, it follows, that unless they believe the same to day which they did yesterday, and so upwards, they cease to be Traditionary Christians, by proceeding not upon an Immediate, but an Interrupted Delivery, or some other Principle. And so there is no denying this Proposition, but by affirming that Traditionary Christians are not Traditionary Christians.

of The second Proposition is this. [And if they follow this Rule, they can never err in Faith.] This is palpably self-evident: For, to follow this Rule is to believe still the same to day which they did yesterday: And so,

if they did this from Christ's time, and so forwards, they must still continue to believe, to the end of the World, the self-same that Christ and his Apostles taught; and, therefore, cannot err in Faith, unless those Authors of our Faith did: Which that they did not, is not to be prov'd to Christians.

are Infallible.] This is no less plainly self-evident. For these words [They can never err in Faith] in the Antecedent, and [They are Infallible] in the Consequent, are most manifestly the self-same in sense, and perfectly

equivalent.

The fourth and last (which according to you, aim'd to prove, that they could not innovate) is this. They could not innovate in Faith, unless they did forget what they held the day before, or out of malice alter it.] And this is no less unexceptionable than its Fellows. For, if they knew not they alter'd Faith, when they alter'd it, they had forgot what they believ'd the day before. If they alter d it wittingly, excuse them from Malice who can; who, believing, as all who proceed upon Tradition do, that Tradition is the certain Means to convey the Doctrin of Christ, would not withstanding alter the Doctrin convey'd to them by Tradition. Pray what ails this Argument? and what wants it, fave bare Application, to conclude what was intended as fully and as rigoroully as you can defire? And, pray, what need was there to apply it to the Roman Church. and fay the follow'd Tradition, to you who denvit not either of the Roman or Greek Church? As every thing is true, and every thing clear; who now besides your felf would have thought of an evalion from it? And yet you venture at one, such as it is. 12. You tell us then, p.5.) That you thought the best way

to Bew the vanity of this rare Demonstration, was to produce an Instance of fuch at follow'd Tradition, and yes Mr. G. could not deny to have err'd, and that was of the Greek Church, &c. You had e'en as good have faid, what Mr. G. fays is true, but yet he does not fay true for all that. For to pitch upon nothing for falle, is, in Disputes, to own that every thing is true. The best way, say you? I frould have thought it every jot as good a way to have faid nothing when one has nothing to fay. But yet the World is oblig'd to you for letting them know what Scholars knew before, that Protestants think is the best way to answer Catholic Arguments, to give them no Answer at all: For you are not to be told that this Inflance of yours is not an Answer to Mr. G ?'s Argument, but a new Argument against him of your own, which undoubtedly you might have produc'd as well as my Lord Falkland, if you had been as. my Lord Falkland was arguing. But it is your turn now to answer. And must you be minded of what every Smatterer in Logic knows, that an Answerer is confin'd to his Concedo, his Nego, and Distinguo, as the Propositions which he is to speak to, are True, False or Ambiguous? He may deny the Inference too, if he find more or other Terms in the Conclusion than in: the Premises. But these are his Bounds; and Answering turns Babbling, when they are exceeded. Most you be minded that the Bufiness must be stopt before it come to the Conclusion, and that otherwise there is no speaking against it? For you know that if the Premilles be right, and the Inference good, the Conclusion must be as necessarily True, as it is that the same: thing cannot be, and not be at once; that is, must be: more certain than that England, for Example, shall not example into Atoms, or be swallow'd up in the Sea to morrow:

morrow : For this, and a thouland fuch things happen to all material Nature; that a Contradiction should prove True, cannot .. And 'tis perfect Contradiction that Terms which cohere in the Premises, by being the same with a Third, should not cohere with one another in the Conclusion. Must you be minded that an Arguer is to prove his Conclusion, and an Answerer to Thew he does not, by affigning where and how he fails? Do you do any fuch matter? Do you so much as go about it? And would you have what you fay pass for an Answer? Pray consider the Case: The Church of Rome is Infallible, fays Mr. G.: She is not, fay you. He brings his Argument, and you your Instance against it. What are People the wifer now? and which shall they be for; the Argument or the Instance? They have reason to think well of the Argument, because you have no fault to find with it; and they may think as they please of the Instance. You would not, I suppose, have them believe you both, and think the Church of Rome for your fake Fallible, and, for his, Infallible at once. Pray what affiftance do you afford them to determin either way? And what do you more than e'en leave them to draw Cuts, and venture their Souls as handy-dandy shall decide, for you or Mr. G.? 'Tis true, when Zeno would needs be paradoxing against the poffibility of Motion, his Vanity was not ill cidicul'd by the walking of Dibgenes before him. For twas palpably and ridiculoufly vain to talk against Motion with a Tongue, that must needs move to talk against it. And there may be vanity too in our Cafe . for ought I know: But where shall it be lodg'd? Why more with Mr. G's: Argument than your Inftance? Why is it more vain to pretend to prove infallibility, upon which depend the Hopes which Millions and Mil-

fions have of a bleffed Eternity, and which is proved by Arguments, to which you think it your best way not to attempt to Answer, than it is to except against a Conclusion, against the Premises whereof there lies no Exception? That is to find fault with a Sum Total. and find none in the particulars, or the calting up: For a Conclusion is a kind of Sum Total of the Premifes. But it is infinitely more vain to talk against one Infallibility, unless you will set up another. Forif there be no Means, by which Men may be fecur'd. that the ways they take to arrive at their greatest and only Good will not deceive them, it cannot be expected they will take all the pains that are necessary to compais that Good, which for ought they can tell, they may not compass with all their pains. 'Tis a pleasant thing in you to talk of the vanity of Mr. G's. Demon-Aration, when, by feeking to take Infallibility out of the World, you are making the whole Creation vain, For all Material Nature was made for Rational Nature, and Rational Nature requires Rational Satisfaction in all its proceedings, and most of all in the pursuit of Happiness: And what Rational Satisfaction can there be. if there may be Deceit in whatever can be propos'd for Satisfaction? In short, the Result of your Instance. whatever was the Aim, it is to amuse and confound People, and hinder them perhaps from feeing what otherwise would be clear; but it shews them nothing, nor eas; for that Argument of yours is not at all of a shewing Nature.

13. Tis, at best, but an Argument (as they call it) ad homises; which you know are of the worst fort of Arguments. They serve for nothing but to stop an Adversaries mouth, or shame him, if he cannot answer without contradicting himself; but are of no use to-

[13]

wards the Discovery of Truth, For a thing is not the more or less True, because such a Man's Tongue isty'd up for speaking against it. But is it so much as an Argument ad hominem? As all the little force of the Topic confifts in the Obligation which a Man may have to grant or deny what it supposes he does, it affords no Argument at all against the Man who has no such Obligation. And pray where does it appear that Mr. G. is oblig'd not to deny that the Greek Church has err'd in matters of Faith? And how can you, of all Men, suppose he is? You, who in your Rational Account(). 32. Jauote these words from Peter Lombard: The Difference between the Greeks and Latins, is in Words and not in Sense: Name Thomas a Jesu, and Azorius, and tell us of other Roman Catholic Authors, of the fame judgment, whom I suppose you could name. Pray, how comes Mr.G. to lye under an Obligation, from which Men of Reputation in his own Communion are exempt? And what a wife Argument ad hominem have you made against him, whom your self have furnish'd with an Argument ad bominem to confute it when he pleases? In fine, he goes to work like a Scholar, puts his Premises, and infers his Conclusion. which you know cannot but be True, if there be no Fault in his Premises: And 'tis for you to find one when you can. You put nothing to shew how the Inference you make should be True, but barely assume, without proof. that he cannot deny it (p.5.): As if Truth depended on his Denying or Affirming, and that what People fay or think, made things True or Falle. And even, for fomuch, you are at his Courtelie: If he be not the better Natur'd, and will crossly affirm or deny in the wrong place, you and your Argument are left in the lurch. In a word, one may see he aim'd at Truth, who takes

at least the way to it: what you aim'd at, you best know; but no body shall ever discover what is, or is

not True, by your Method.

14. But that you may not complain, your Cock is not fuffer'd to fight, let us fee what your Instance will do. You put it thus (p.5.) The Greek Church went upon Tradition from Father to Son, as much as ever the Roman did. And I defir'd to know of Mr. G. whether the Greek Church notwithstanding did not err in matters of Faith ; And, if it did, then a Church holding to Tradition was not Infallible. How! If it did? Why then it is apparent if it did not, your Argument holds not And will you affirme that the Greek Church errs, who believe she does not? Will you take a Premise to infer a Conclusion, upon which the Salvation of People depends, which Premise your self in your own heart chink is not true? Can you deal thus with their Souls, who pin them upon you, perswade them of what you are not perswaded your self, and offer them a Securiv for their Eternity, in which your own judgment tells you there is a flaw? For you have declar'd your felf upon this Matter in your Rational Account, and taken great pains to clear the Greek Church, at least upon the Article of the Holy Ghoft, in which confifts their main difference with the Latins, and to which the other two you mention were added, I suppose, for fastion sake. I know you there propose to free that Church from the charge of Herelie. But pray what difference betwint Herefie and Error in matter of Faith? unless you will trifle about Obstinacy, and fuch collateral confiderations; which neither concern dis here, hor were any part of your Defence there. I fee too that you word it here conditionally, and with reference to Mr. G's. Answer: As if his Answer made

or marr'd, and the Greek Church did or did not err, as he fays, I, or No. Whatever Mr. G, may fay, or you have faid, unless the Greek Church actually does Err your Instance is no Instance of a Church that goes moon Tradition and Errs; and your Inference that then a Church holding to Tradition was not Infallible, is wondrous pertinently inferred from the Example of a Church that errs not. Pray take it well that I intreat you by all the care you have of your own Soul, and fhould have of others, to manage Disputes about Faith a little otherwise, and not propose Arguments, in which you must needs think your self there is no force. For there is plainly none in this, if the Greek Church does not err; and you at least think she does not. I am fure 'tis what I would not do my felf for all the World.

15. But to proceed to Mr. G's. Answer, (p.5.) It mas. fay you, that the Greek Church follow'd Tradition, till the Arians left that Rule and took up a new one, &c. And why has he not answer'd well? You assum'd that the Greek Church err'd while it went upon Tradition; If you did not, you faid nothing; for, that a Church may follow Tradition at one time, and leave it at another. is no news. 'Fis the case of all erring Churches which ever follow'd Tradition at all. Mr. G's Reply then that Tradition was follow'd till another Rule was taken up. denies that Tradition and Error were found together. as you contended, in the Greek Church. And pray what more direct or more full Answer can there be to an Argument, than to deny the Premises? As slightly as. you would feem to think of him, he understood difputing better than to start aside into an Exception. against your Conclusion, but answers fair and home by. denying the Assumption from which you infer it; which:

which now he has done, you know it rests with you to prove it; and yet you never think on't, as far as I see; but, as if you had no more to do, sall a complaining against Mr. G. for speaking of the Ariam, and not of the present Greek Church; and against his Copy, for leaving out the Inserence which you drew. In doing which, if he did so, he did you no small kindness; there being no Premises to draw the Inserence from, as has been shewn above; or if any, such as put you to contradictyour own Doctrin ere any thing could sol-

low from them.

16. As for the omission of the Inference, I know not how it happen'd, nor mean to meddle with matter of Fact. But I fee they had reason, who observ'd before me, that 'tis a thing of no manner of Consequence, I verily think, in your own Judgment. Unless you think the Age we live in fo dull, that, without much hammering it into their Heads, it cannot be perceiv'd, that if a Church has err'd which held to Tradition, a Church may err which holds to Tradition. Or, unless you think it of mighty Consequence to have an Inference stand in the Relation which fell with the Premiles at the Conference. Mr. G. took them away by his denial, and you must begin again, and bring something from whence you may draw an Inference, if you will needs have an Inference; for an Inference cannot be drawn from nothing. Pray divert us not perpetually from minding what we are about; but remember the Question now is, Whether the Greek Church held to Tradition and err'd at once? and bethink your felf, if you please of a Medium, which will infer that Point for you; for Mr. G. you fee denies it.

17. From his mentioning the Arians you take occasito speak big, and bear us in hand he was hard put to

in and fought an occasion, and affirm (post) you could nee no Answer at all to the Cafe of the present Greek Church As if his Answer pinche on the Arians, and were not as full to the prefent as past Greek Church. Ingoes on this, That those who err in Faith les them be who they will, and the Error what it will, and in what Time and Place you will, all leave Tradition. Whether the Case of the present Greek Church be the fame with the Arians, is matter of Fast, with which Mr. G. did well not to meddle site is for you to make it out if you will make good your Argument Modern or Ancient Herefie is all one to his Answer, which is applicable to all Herefie: And you complain of the want of an Answer when you have one. Pray, if a Man should put an Objection to you about an Ammal. for Example, and you answer it of M Animals, would you think it just in him to quarrel with you for not mentioning the Rational or Irrational in particular? And yet this is your Quarrel to Mr. G. All your magnificent Talk (p. 6.) of undeniably true, granted by Mr. G. known to every one, o'es as apr as I fee it is to make a Reader believe your Instance is noter jously true, and against which Mr. G. has nothing to fay, cannot make me, or any Man of Reason, who examins the Point, believe he has any Reafon to fay more, till you do. He has answer'd directly, and politively deny'd, that Brior and Tradition can be found together in the Greek Church, or any other, modern or ancient. There it flicks, and you may drive it on farther (it being your own Argument) if you pleafe. Only when you tell us (p. 6.) that the present Greek Church in all its Differences with the Roman, firl pleased Tradition, and adher a town I with you had fold us whether you speak of Differences in matter of Faith, or no. For Differences may be occasion'd

onld by matters of Faith, which are not Differences in Faith. If you do not, you support your instance very frongly, and prove the confiftence of Tradition with Error in Paith very Learnedly, from Differences which belong not to Faith, If you do, as Nature itches after Brange Sights, I long to fee by what Differences, or any thing elfe, it can be made out, That an erring Church can still plead Tradition, and adhere to it. Not but that for Pleading much may be, there are fuch confident doings in the World. As certain as it is, that the Religion in England now, is not the same which it was before Henry the Eighth, I think there is confidence enough in England to plead Tradition for it. 'Tis but finding fome Expression in an ancient Writer, not couch'd with Prophetical forelight enough to avoid being understood, as some will defire it should, and it will serve turn to pretend to Antiquity, and bear the Name of Tradition. So I suspect you take it your self, when you say the Arians infifted on Tradition : For fure you do not think in earnest, that Doctrin contrary to Consubstantiality. was taught by Chrift, and believ'd from Father to Son till the Council of Nice. This, or some such thing may perhaps have been pleaded; but for adhering to Tradition, Your Servant. For, pray, did Christ teach any Error? When a Father believ'd what Christ taught him, and the Son what the Father believ'd, did not the Son too believe what Christ taught? Run it on to the last Son that shall be born in the World, must not every one believe what Christ taught, if every one believ'd what his Father believ'd? And will you go about to persuade us, that there actually is a company of Men in the World who adber'd to this Method, all Sons believing always as their Fathers did, whereof the First believ'd as Christ saught, and who not withflanding err'd in matters of Faith ? Faith? They would thank you for making this out, who would be glad that Christ taught Error and were not Gods But it is not plainer that Two and Three make Five, than it is that this cannot be. And yet you would top it upon us, and bear us in hand it is not only true, but apparent in the Greek Church, and known to every body who knows any thing of it. The comfort is, there is nothing for all these Assertions but your Word; in which, where you flick not to pals it for an arrant Impossibility, I for my part do not think there is Abso-

luce Certainty. The profit wonter the transporter 18. I fee not what there remains more, but to bear in mind where we are. At the Conference, instead of answering Mr. 6's Argument, you would needs make one of your own, which was in short; The Greek Church goes upon Tradition and errs, therefore another Church mayerr which goes upon Tradition. There was no need to trouble the Greek Church for the matter: It had been altogether as methodical, and as much to purpole, to have instanc'd in the Latin Church it self, and never gon further; and shorter, to have spar'd Instancing too, and have faid without more ado, Mr. G's Conclusion is not true: For you do no more, till you make it appear, that the Church you pitch upon for an Instance, do's indeed adhere to Tradition and err. But. because this had been too open, and People would have fooner perceiv'd that it had been to fay, I know not bow to answer Mr. G's Argument, but will notwithstanding stand to it, that his Conclusion is false, you thought the best way to divert the Reader's attention from what's before him, was to travel into Greece; and yet when you come there, do no more than if you had flay'd ar home: For you barely far there is both Tradition and Error in the Greek Church, and you might have faid 25 Work for Mr G. 2 D 20. At

as much of the Latin; or, without mentioning either, have faid. The Mr. G. has provide Traditionary Church cannot err, I for it can and have All is but Saying till you come to Proving: Only to make a formal shew with an Antecedent and a Conclusion, you say it with the Ceremony of an Argument of which since Mr. G. deny dethe Antecedent, he had no more to do till you proved it.

19. So it stood at the Conference, and so it stands fill, and for ought I fee, is like to fland : For tho' you have writ two Letters fince, there appears no word of Proof in either, or fign that you do fo much as think on le. You only fay your Inflance over again, and would have the Face you fet upon it, and great Words you give it, make it pass for plain and undentable, when all the while it is plainly impossible, and actually deny'd. Mr. G. I hope, will bide by his Answer, because it is a good one. Frue in it felf, and direct to the Point : For it denies luft what you allum'd, That the Greek Church good upon Tradition, and fell at the same time into Brior. And speaking as you do, or should do, of Error in matter of Faith, Enclid never made any thing planer than it is. That where ever Error comes in, Tradation goes our." Of necessity therefore, if the present Greek Church have adher'd to Tradition, it has not ert'd: If it have err'd, it has not adher'd to Tradition. Which of the two is the Cafe, neither concerns Mr. G. nor can he dispute it without following bad Example, that is, falling to Argue now it is his Part to Answer. You would pass it upon us, that the Greek Church has err'd without Iwerving from Tradition; and you must either make it our, or acknowledge you have made much ado about nothing: For your Inflance is no inhanco, till it appears to be true? Till you do it, there is Work for Mr. G. 20. At

place Attheduce (place) you define Mr. Outdombig delens ships, and tell us why you delire it, and what will fol-low if he accept or decline your Motion. I I meither understand how your Proposals follow from your Reasons. norvour Confequences from your Proposals : But think ivon more worth losing time upon: them, within you thingle we worth bording of the Victorian - Thin First is, That we [Protestants] have two elabfolure Certains at to the Rule of our Faith, viz. the Scripture ; altho we have a larger and firmer Tradition for it, viz. the Coplent of all Christian Churches ir han 1900 [Catholics] pain have for she Points of Futthin difference bezween asnit entitied and soll cantell you a better Reafon for this Proposal than any you give. There was no avoiding to own Absolute Certainty to a Man who talk'd of quitting your Communion without it. But cook knew well enough that your Abfolase Cercaines would be biwittled into Sufficient Certainty; and Sufficient Curlainty into no Certainty at last and had your Wits about you when you thought of this Propolal : For it is in effect to fay, This Certainer of Fairbin a troublefor matter, and not for my twin ; Lierus go to fomething affer leave Faith and mile to Seripture of which you! Mr. O. Shill prode the have my Absolute Certainty & For if I (bould go thank to prove me have, I forefee, that while I am feeking barbor in my larger and firmer Tradition, I flall wenture to falit upon your Infallbility Vito comeraditt and igth Principle for the faith There can be no of Procest anti- and fall de unamand since the Sugres desilytes necessity supme in Brich Wonpfult, from plactor 96, which There no fallible Society mind to come near But whatever Reafons you had to of Men, either make this Propolat, I fee nonechat Mr. G. has to accept it. Do you prove, if you pleafer that you have tings among Abloture Chrisiney ; spour who bear those in bland who Christians. confult you, that you have grand Absolute Certainty ciple 15.

pos'd of any In. to atteff or explain thefe Wri-Dr. St. Prim.

too of that of which you profest'd your felf absolutely Dr. St's Copy. Certain pair. That you won bold all the fine Doffrin that was taught by Christ and his Apostles; which by your own confession there, is the true Point. For you know very well, one is not certain of his Faith by being cercain of Scripture : Your felf take all who diffent from yours, to have not only an Owcestate, but a Wrong Faith; elfe why do you differe from them? And yet they have all as much Certainty of Scripture as you. The truth is, if you were prest to make out your Absolute Certainty even of Scripture in your way, you would perhaps find a hard Task of it, for all your Appeal to Tradition. But it was not the Point for which the Conference was, nor ought it be the Point here, neither ought Mr. G. to meddle with it, and you trust much to his good Nature to propose it: For, besides that all the thanks he would have for his pains, would be to have the Arguments against your Certainty. turn'd against the Certainty of Scripture one day, as if he did not believe Scripture Certain; You would have him undertake a matter in which he has no concern, to fave you from an Undertaking in which you are deeply concern'd; but with which you know not how to go thorow; which is a very reasonable Request. In a word, it is for you either to make manifest now, what you fould have made manifest at the Conference, viz. That Procestants have Absolute Certainty, not only nereffin Jupa of the Scripture, which they call their Rule, but of the rord of any lat. Faith which they pretend to have from that Rule; or elfe to fuffer another thing to be manifest, vis. That I the stick of exefaid true when I faid you cannot do it; and thither I am Herry slett was Do you prove if you pleasementliss is said tings among. Christians. od and Howeverd I am glad to bear any Talk from you Dr. St. Prins of utbfolute Certainty, leven the it bo but Talk : Tis a ciple 15. great

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great Stranger, as coming from your Quarters, and has a friendly and an accommodating look, and therefore for both regards deferves a hearty welcome. For this very Profession makes a fair approach towards the Do-Etrin of Infallibility, or rather 'tis the felf-fame with int it being against Common Sense to fay you ninge your felf Abjolutely Certain of any thing, if at the fame time you judge you may be deceiv'd in thus judging. But I accept the Omen that you feem to grant you are thus Absolutely Certain, or Infallible, by virtue of Tradition; for this makes Tradition to be an Infallible Ascertainer in some things at least; and, so, unless some special difficulty be found in other things that light into the same Channel, it must needs bring them down infallibly too. Now I cannot for my heart discern what great difficulty there can be to remember all along the velterdays Faith, or to be willing to be guided and infiructed by their yesterdays Fathers, Teachers and Pastors; especially the sense of the Points (to omit many other means) being determin'd by open and daily Practice. Yet I a little fear all this your feeming kindness for Tradition, is only for your own Interest; and that, because you were necessitated to make use of it to abet Scripture's Letter, you allow it in that regard, these high Complements; but in other things, particularly in conveying down a Body of Christian Fairh (which is incomparably more easie) it will prefently become useless and good for nothing. In the former exigency you esteem it A worth, Rule, but in the later duty, A Rule worthy

23. Now to let the Reader plainly see that it was meer Force, and not Inclination, which oblig'd you to grant an Absolute Certainty in Tradition conveying down Scriptures Letter, we will examin what you

[24]

allow die when you laid wour Principles, and to spoke ry; Your fifteenth Principle is put down (p.90.) in Error Nonplust, and that part of it that concerns this present Point, is thus reflected upon by your Adversary (2.92, 93.) Lugain, tho call this form since and that the Scriptures were own'd as containing in them the whole Will of God fo plainly reyeal'd that no fober Enquirer can mils of what's necessary to Salvation, and that therefore there needed no Church to explain them : Tes tis a firange Consequence Lihar therefore there can be no peceffity of any Infallible Society of Men to Arrest them, or to witness that the Letter of Scripture is right. This is To far from following out of the farmer part of Dr. St's. Discourse, that the contrary ought to follow; or, from prejudicing his own protence, that it conduces exceeds ingly to it. For certainly his Sober Enquirer would lefs be in doubt to mils of what's necessary to Salvation in case the Letter, on which all depends, be well attefted, than if it be not; and most certainly an Infallible Society of Men can berter attest that Letter than a Fallible one; and those Writings can with better sbewof Reason be own'd to contain in them the Will of God, if their Letter be attested beyond possibility of being wrong, than if left in a pollibility of being such; for if the Letter be wrong, All is wrong in this cafe. _] As manifest then as 'tis, that to be Absolutely Certain of any thing, is not to be Fallibly Certain of it; that is, as manifelt as 'tis, that to be Abfolutely Certain of a thing, is to be Infallibly Certain of it; fo manifest it is, that you there contradict your felf here, and, that, however you may endeavour to come off, you allow not heartily, nor without fome regret and reluctancy, an Absolute Certainty to Tradition, even in Attesting Scripture's Letter,

24. In these words of yours (p.7) [As to the Rule of our Faith] give me leave to reflect on the word [OUR;] and thence to ask you, who are TOU? A Question which I ask not of your Name or Sirname, but of your Judgment (as you call it) of Discretion. Are you a Socinian, an Arian, a Sabellian, an Eutychian, co. or what are you? Are you a whole, or a half, or a Quarter-nine-and-thirty-Article Man? Do you take them for Snares, or Fences, and when for the one, and when for the other, and wherefore? These words [The Rule of OUR Faith] make you all these at once; for all these profess unanimously Scripture's Letter is their Rule of Faith. Mr. G. when he came to your House, imagin'd he was to treat with a Protestant, or fomething like it, and to have learn'd from you what Absolute Certainty you would assign for your, (that is, Protestant) Faith; and you give him only a Generical Latitudinarian Rule, common to all the Herefies in the World. The Project of the Comprehenfion-Bill was a trifle to this : It brings into one Fold all the most enormous Straglers that have been fince Christ's time, nay Wolves, and Sheep and all. It blends into one Mass the most heterogeneous and hitherto irreconcilable Sects. Nay, it miraculously makes Light and Darkness very consistent, and Christ and Beliat very good Friends. For your own Credit fake then diflinguish your kind of Protestants (if you be indeed one of that Church) from that infamous Rabble of Rigmatiz'd Hereticks; and let us know what is the Proper Difference that restrains that Notion of a Common Rule to your particular, as fuch a kind of Protestant, and shew us that specifical Rule to be Absolutely Certain. I say, fuch a kind; for even the word Protefant too is a Sabaltern Genus, and has divers Species, and

and 'tis doubted by many, who are no Papifts, under which Species you are to be rankt. But, why should I vex you with putting you upon manifest Impossibilities? For the Letter being the common Rule to them all, and, as daily experience shews us, variously explicable, that which particularizes it to belong specially to this or that Sect, as its proper Rule, can be only this. [According as my felf, and those of my Judgment under-stand or interpret it.] The Difference then constituting your Protestant Rule, as distinguisht from that of those most abominable Heresies, can only be fas my own Judgment, or others of my side, thus or thus interpret Scripture's Letter] and wriggle which way you pleafe, there it will and must end at last. Go to work then, diffinguish your self by your Ground of Faith, and then make out this your proper Rule to be Absolutely Certain or Infallible; and then, who will not laugh at you for attempting it, and assuming that to your self, which you deny to God's Church, and preferring your felf as to the Gift of Understanding Scripture right, before the whole body of those many and Learned Churches in Communion with Rome? Nay, and before the Socinians too; without fo much as pretending to make out to the World, that you have better Means, either Natural or Supernatural, to interpret those Sacred Oracles, than had the others.

25. My last Exception is, that you pretend the Letter of Scripture is a Rule of Faith for your People, which not one in a Million, even of your own Protestants relies on, or ever thinks of relying on, in order to make choice of their Faith, or determining what to hold. This pretence of yours looks so like a meer Jest, that I cannot perswade my self you are in earnest, when you advance such a Paradox. For, tis manifest

that while your Protestants are under Age, and not yet at years of Discretion to judge, they simply believe their Fathers and Teachers; that is, they follow the way of Tradition, however misplac'd. And, when they come to Maturity, pray tell us truly, how many of your Sober Enquirers have you met with in your life, who endeavour to abstract from all the prejudices they have imbib'd in their Minority, and, reducing their inclin'd thoughts to an equal Balance of Indifferency, do with a wife Jealousie, lest this Popish way of believing immediate Fathers and Pastors should delude them, as it has done the whole World formerly, refolve to examin the Book of Scripture it felf, read it attentively, pray daily and fervently, that God's Spirit would discover to them, whether what they have learn'd hither to be true or no, and what is; and, in a word, use all the Fallible means (for you allow them no other) which your Sober Enquirers are to make use of to find out their Faith? I doubt, if you would please to answer sincerely, you would seriously confels you scarce ever met with such a one in your life; that is, never met with any one who rely'd upon Scripture's Letter practically for his Rule of Faith, whatever you may have taught them to talk by rote. Can any Man of Reason imagin, that all the Resormed in Denmark or Sueden (to omit others) did light to be so unanimously of one Religion meerly by means of reading your Letter-Rule, and your Sober Enquiry? Or can any be so blind, as not to see, that 'tis the following the natural way of Tradition, or Childrens believing Fathers (that is, indeed, of Education) that fuch multitudes in feveral places, continue still of the same perfwafton; and that you confequently owe to this way, which you so decry in Catholics, that any considerable D 2 number

number of you do voluntarily hang together at all? And that those Principles of yours, which you take up for a shew, when you write against Catholics, would if put in practice, in a flort time crumble to Atoms all the Churches in the World? Perhaps, indeed, when your Protestants come at Age, they may receive some Confirmation from their Fathers and Preachers quoting Scripture-places against what Catholics hold, or what they shall please to say they hold; and by the same means come to believe a Trinity, the Godhead of Christ, Christ's Body being absent in the Sacrament, and such like: but do the Hearers and Learners make it their bulinels to ule all careful difouificion (for a hubbering superficial diligence will not serve the turn in mat; ters of fuch high Concern) whether the Catholics, and those great Scripturists, who deny those other Points. do not give more congruous explications of those places than their own Preachers do? unless they do this, or fomething equivalent, 'tis manifest the Letter of Scripture is not their Rule, but honest Tradition. And that they do no fuch thing, is hence very apparent, that they rest easily satisfied, and well appaid with their Parson's interpretation of Scripture, they presently accept it for right and good, and readily fwallow that fense, which some Learned Men, of their own Judgment, affign it, without thinking themselves oblig'd to observe your Method of Sober Enquiry. You may rail against the Council of Trent, as you will, for forbidding any to interpret Scripture against the Sense which the Church holds; but 'tis no more than what your Hearers perpetually practife, and the Preachers too (for all theirfair words) expect from them. And I much doubt even your felf (rho' your Principles are the most pernicious for taking matters out of the Churches,

[29]

Churche's, and putting them into private Hands, of any Protestant I ever yet read) would not take it very well if some Parishioner of yours, presuming upon his Prayers for Direction, &c. should tell you that you err'd in Interpreting Scripture, and that the Sense he gave it, was found and right Faith, yours wrong and Heretical; and I would be glad to know what you would fay to him, according to your Principles, if he should hap to stand out against you, that he understands Scripture to be plainly. against a Trinity and Christ's Divinity, as John Biddle did against the Minister of his Parish, and the whole Church of England to boot. 'Tis plain you ought to cherish and commend him for standing firm to his Rule; But I am much afraid you would be out of humor with him, and efteem your felf affronted. You may pretend what you please of high Expressions given by Antiquity, of Scripture's incomparable Excellency, and Sufficiency for the Ends it was intended for, which we do not deny to it; but I dare fay, even your felf do's not think, that either the Ancient Faithful, or the Modern Reformers, meant that any of the Ecclesia credens, or Believing Church, should have the liberty to Interpret Scripture against the Ecclesia docens, or Teaching Church i. e. Paftors; or Coyn a Faith out of it, contrary to the prefent or former Congregation of which he was a Member.

26. The sum is; 'Tis evident hence, that Tradition of your Fathers and Teachers, and not Scriptures Letter, is indeed your Rule; That by it you Interpret Scripture; which then only is call'd your Rule, and made use of as such, when you are Disputing against us; because having thus set it up, to avoid and counterbalance the Authority of the former Church you lest, you make account your own private Interpretation of

it may come to be thought Argumentative against the great Body of those Churches from whose Communion you departed; and yet you judge no private Parishioner should claim the same Priviledge against you, without affronting your great Learning, and Pastoral Authority. But I much wonder you should still venture to call Scripture's Letter a Rule of Faith, having been beaten from that Tenet so pitifully in Error Nonplust, from Pag. 59. to Pag. 72. where I believe you may observe divers Particulars requisit to be clear'd e're the Letter can be in all regards Absolutely Certain, which the Consent of all Christian Churches will never reach to by their meer Authority, unless you will allow the Sense of Christ's Doctrin descending by Tradition, did preserve the Copy substantially right and intire.

27. Your pretended Rule of Faith then, being in reality the same that is challeng'd by all the Heretics in the World, viz. Scripture's Letter Interpreted by your felves; I will let you see in this following short Discourse, how far it is from being Absolutely Certain.

I. God has left us some Way to know surely what

Christ and his Apostles taught.

II. Therefore this Way must be such, that they who take it, shall arrive by it at the End it was intended for; that is, know surely what Christ and his

Apostles taught.

III. Scripture's Letter Interpretable by Private Judgments, is not that Way; for we experience Prefbyterians and Socinians (for example) both take that Way, yet differ in such high Fundamentals, as the Trinity, and the Godhead of Christ.

IV. The

IV. Therefore Scripture's Letter Interpretable by Private Judgments, is not the Way left by God to know furely what Christ and his Apostles taught, er surely to arrive at right Faith.

V. Therefore they who take only that Way, cannot by it arrive surely at right Faith, since 'tis impossible to arrive at the End, without the Means or Way that leads to it.

28. I do not expect any Answer to this Discourse, as short as it is, and as plain and as nearly as it touches your Copyhold; it may be ferv'd as Mr. G's Argument is, turn'd off so so with an Instance, if there be one at hand; or, with what always is at hand, an Irony or scornful Jest, your readiest, and, in truth, most useful Servants: But you must be excus'd from finding any Proposition or Inference to deny, or any thing, save the Conclusion it felf: Which, tho' it will not be fairly avoided, I cannot hope should be fairly admitted, unless I could hope that Men would be more in love with Truth than their Credit. Till Truth be taken a little more to heart, Catholic Arguments will and must always be faulty; but they are the most unluckily and crossy faulty of any in the World; faulty still in the wrong place. When fault is found in other Arguments, it is always found in the Premisses; in these, 'tis found in the Conclusion: In which, notwithstanding, all who know any thing of a Conclusion, know there can be no fault, if there be none in the Premisses. Indeed, they shew that to be true which Men cannot endure should be true; and that is their great and unpardonable fault. That you may not think I talk in the Air, I de

I declare openly, that you cannot Answer this Discourse, unless you will call some unconcerning Return an Answer; and I engage my self to shew the Proposition true, and the Inference good, which you shall pitch upon to deny; And the Distinction, if you will make any, not to purpose. The truth is, I engage for no great matter; for I know beforehand you can no more Answer now, than you could to Error Nonplust, or can prove an

Absolute Certainty in Protestant Faith.

29. To return now to Mr. G. the Second thing which you defire him to make good, is, That the Tradition from Father to Son is an infallible Conveyance of Matters of Faith. notwith standing the Greek Church is charged by him with Error, which adher'd to Tradition. That is, you defire him to prove over again, what you tell us your felfhe has prov'd once already: For you tell us (p. 5.), he prov'd, That they [Traditionary Christians] could not innovate in Faith, unless they did forget what they held the day before, or out of malice alter it. Pray, when it is prov'd, that the Conveyance of Faith by Tradition, excludes the poffibility of Change in Faith, fave by forgetfulness or malice, is it not prov'd, That, where there could be neither forgetfulness nor malice, there could be no change in Faith? You do not, I suppose, desire he should prove, that Men had always Memories, or that Christians were never malicious enough to damn themselves and Posterity wittingly; and yet it can stick no where else: If it can, faid Mr. G. affign where. Now you know very well, that a Conveyance which makes it impossible that Faith should ever be chang'd, is an Infallible Conveyance; and the very thing is prov'd which you defire should be prov'd. What reason has Mr. G. to prove it a fecond time? And what reason have you to defire it? If Proof would content you, you

you have it already; but a fecond cannot hope to content you better than the first, unless it be worse.

30. Yes, but you would have him prove, Notwithstanding the Greek Church, &c. (p. 7.) Notwithstanding? Why, do you think it is with Arguments as with Writs, where the want of a Non obstante spoils all? When a Truth is once prov'd, is it not prov'd, notwithstanding all Objections? And will any Notwithstanding unprove it again? Will your Notwithstanding shew us there was a time in which Men were not Men, nor acted like Men? Will it shew us, that a thing which cannot possibly be chang'd, may yet possibly remain not the fame? Will it shew us, that a Cause can be without its Effect, or an Effect without its Cause? Will it shew us, that a thing can be and not be at once ? Unless it can do fuch Feats as thefe, you may keep your Notwithstanding to your felf, for any Service it will do you here: For all the Notwithstandings in the world cannot hinder a thing which is true, from being true; nor the Proof which proves it to be true, from being a Proof. Mr. G's Proof shews, that Tradition from Father to Son is an Infallible Conveyance of Faith, as plainly, as that Men are Men: And would you perfuade us with the Rhetorick of your Notwithstanding, that we do not see what we fee? Tho' you had brought twenty of them instead of one, we could fee nothing by them, but that you had a good Fancy; for they shew us nothing of the Object, nor offer at it. You shew us not how the Operations of Human Nature should be suspended in our present Case, nor any thing which should or could suspend them, but would have us believe Men were prodigioully forgetful or malicious, purely for the fake of an Imagination of yours. I pray rub up afresh your old Logical

Logical Notions, and reflect whether it were ever heard of in University Disputes, that when an Argument is advanc'd, the Defendant is allow'd to make Objections against it; and instead of Answering, bid the Arguer prove his Conclusions to be true, Notwithstanding all his Objections? Consider how perfectly this confounds the Offices of the Disputant and Defendent, and makes all Regular Discourse impossible. Consider how this new Method of yours destroys the very possibility of ever concluding any thing, that is, the very Faculty of Reafoning; For Objections being generally multipliable without end, if all of them must be Solv'd e're any Argument concludes, nothing will be concluded, nor any Conclusion admitted: And so a long so Farewel to Rational Nature. Confider that Truth is built on its own Intrinfecal Grounds, and not on the Solving Objections. For your own Credits fake then with Learned Men and Logicians, do not feek to evade with Notwithstandings, but Answer fairly and squarely to the Argument as it lies: Confider, that who has found the Cause, has found the Effect. Mr. G. has found us a Cause of Infallible Conveyance, and therefore has shew'd us an Infallible Conveyance. You pretend, that tho' there was the Cause, there was not the Effect; and this 'tis known beforehand cannot be, and you knew it as well as any body: But you knew likewise there was no faving your Stakes without playing a new Game; and therefore, give you your due, did all that could be done, in trying to divert our fight from a Matter plain before us, and amuse us us with a Matter of Fact, which you are fure will be obfcure enough, by that time it is handled long enough. The Terms you put, viz. Tradition, Error, and the Greek Greek Church, must needs bring into Dispute, whether fuch and fo many Quotations, or fome one or two Men disclaiming their Tenet to be a Novelty, be a Proof of Tradition from Father to Son; whether the Error be any Error; and whether, and for how much, an Error in Faith, and how much of it belongs to Divinity; whether the Greek Church be ingag'd by a Citation from a Greek Author; of two that be cited, one against another, which shall be preferr'd, and thought to speak the sense of his Church; and which is a Latiniz'd, which a frank Grecian. And who shall see through the Mists which these Disputes will raise? More too will fall in in process of time: There will be wrangling about the sense of Words, the propriety of Phrases, the preference of Readings, and twenty such important quarrels; which will tire out every body, and fatisfie no body. In short, you faw that if you could perswade People not to think the Church of Rome Infallible, till all be faid, which will occur to be faid of the Greek Church, you are fafe enough; For Doomsday will come before that Till then you may carry it with a shew of Erudition, because there must be abundance of Greek cited. And this is all which can come of your Instance; and I wish it were not all you had in your Eye.

31. In the mean time you have not answer'd Mr. G. because you have found no fault in any Proposition, or in the Inference of his Argument; and therefore it rests with you to answer it. He has answer'd you; because he has found this fault with your Instance, which you make your Antecedent, that it is not true; and that the Greek Church did not at once

err in Faith, and adhere to Tradition: and therefore it rests again with you to prove it; and yet while you are Debtor both ways, you call upon him to pay. Ere we part, Take this along with you, that the Debt which you are precisely bound to satisfie, first is to answer his Argument, and till you do this, you can claim no right to Object or Argue.

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SIR

Your bumble Servant.

The Second

Catholick Letter,

OR,

REFLECTIONS

ON THE

Reflecters Defence

OF

Dr. Stillingfleet's First Letter to Mr. G.

Against the

ANSWER

To the Arguing Part of it.

Published with Milomance.

LONDON.

Printed, and fold by Matthew Turner at the Lamb in High-Holbourn. 1 6 8 7.

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READER.

Erhaps it has scarce been seen hitherto, that all our Polemical Contests were reduc'd within so narrow a compass. My First Letter insisted chiefly on Two short Discourses: Whereof the one undertook to shew the Nullity of the Rule of Faith, claim'd by Dr. St. and his Protestants. The other the Absolute Certainty of the Catholic Rule; and the whole Controver he was, in short, about the Certainty or Uncertainty of Christian Faith. Both of those Discourses were presum'd by us to be Conclufive; and so we offer'd a fair Advantage to our Adversary, if he could shew clearly any of our Propositions was false, or their Connexion flack. Hence I had good hopes that Reply of mine would have brought our Controversie very near an end, had Dr. St's Return been suitable to our Attempts. Especially, it had brought the Business to a Crisis, had be been pleas'd to shew the Absolute Certainty of his Rule, or of his faith, as grounded on that Rule, which was justly expected. But Error Nonplust has already convinc a the World, That the bringing any Dispute to Principles or Grounds, agrees not with their Constitution who have mone. While our Expectations-were thus rais'd, no News could we hear of Dr. St. An Answer comes out from another hand; not very obliging to him in my opinion, whether he were or were not preacquainted with it : For if he were (and 'tis hard to -imagine

To the READER.

imagine that a Piece writ in his Defence had not both his Direction, Inspection, and Approbation) People will suspect he fore aw what would come of it, and was glad the Shame should fall on another; and that he has but little Kindnels for his Friend, whom he suffers to Write on this manner. If he were not, they will suspect his Friends have as little Kindness for him, and less Regard, who manage his Cause without his Privity. However it be, the Answer affords no work for a Replier, but the most ungrateful one in the World; to be perpetually telling men of their Faults, without the least hopes of doing them good, or contributing to their amendment; They being of such a nature, that they are our Adversaries most necessary supports in their unlucky circumstances. And indeed, the whole Piece seems to have no other Design, but to bring the Dispute into a Wrangle. Tet this Profit may be hoped, that every moderate Judgment will fee by the very methods we take, which fide defires and fincerely endeavours that Truth may appear. It would be much a greater, if Dr. St. or whom he pleases to employ, would plainly shew the * Absolute Certainty which he fays they have; or elfe plainly confess they have it not. But this is not to be hoped. Tet I entreat the Reader, because I distrust my own Credit, to sollicit him (if he thinks it not too dangerous for him) to do the one or the other; and in doing it, to use as much Reason as he will, and as little Laughing as he can. We are sufficiently satisfy'd of his faculty of Risibility, and would be glad to see a touch or two of his Rationality.

* Second Letter, P. 14.

REFLECTIONS

ON

Dr. St's Reflecters Defence

Addrest to Himself,

Enquire not, Sir, fince it concerns me not to know, why you would needs become a Party, or rather an Advocate in a Cause, depending between Dr. St. and another. If it were defir'd of you, you are to be excus'd, fo you perform well what you undertook; that is, to defend the Dr. especially his Logick, and his Absolute Certainty; But if you had nothing to draw you in, besides the Weight of what you had to say, I think you might very well have kept out. You begin like a man of Art, with prepoffelling your Reader against your Adversary, and in favour of your self: and so would have me pass for a pleasant, artificial, deluding Companion; and your felt for a man, Godly even to scruple, and who cannot barely repeat the Metaphor (of holding ones Cards) without * asking Pardon. * P. 2. The Reader will find, by your writing, to which of us your former Character is most like. In the mean time, I own the Confidence of talking of Self-evidence, and Absolute Certainty, and Infallibility; and bless the Mercy of God, for making me of a Communion, in which :

to preserve me from the Face (if I must not say Confidence) of fetting up for a Guide without them. For, between a blind Guide, and one who fees not his way, I think the difference is not great. Much good may your Modesty do you; your Obscurity; your Uncertainty and Fallibility. If your Conscience perswade you these are the best qualifications of Christan Doctrin, and best Security which God would provide for the Souls of men, mine would sooner use Twenty Metaphors, than perswade People to venture their Fremity upon them. But, at worst, it is no greater fault in me sure, than in * pr. St's first * Dr. St. to talk of Absolute Certainty. Unless he perhaps repent, and would be content an unfortunate Word inconfiderately blurted out, thould be retracted for thim by another, which tis not so handsome to retract himfelf: whereas I, like a man of Confidence, meant what I faid, and fland to it; and can have no good opinion of those modest men, that fay and unfay, as futes with the

Letter, p. 7. & fecond, p.14.

> 2. To fall to our Business, your Discourse has Three Parts. The First reflects on what I said of turning Proof over from your Protestants to Catholicks: The Second pretends to answer my Argument : And the Third, Mr. G's. Some Gleanings in your Language there are befides; but this is the main Crop. Upon the first Point, fince Proof does or does not belong to Protestants, there is nothing more to be faid to purpose, but either to flew that Proof does not belong to them, or to bring it if it does. But let us fee how you handle the matter.

> 3. I had exprest my felf to grieve and wonder there should be so little value for Souls among your Party, as to fend Men to the Tribunal of God, without furnishing them with affurance that they can justifie their Accounts themfelves. But

occasion.

But if (fay you) they may be affired they can give up a good account, may they not be affur & that they have the Grace of God, and of their Justification and Salvation ? And then what becomes of the Council of Trent? Of what Account do you fpeak, I befeech you? If, as I did, of an Account of Faith, I hope you will not perswade us a man cannot know why he believes, without knowing whether he be in the State of Grace, or fure of his Salvation; and therefore. I hope you will not perfift to think it hard to conceive how the bare affurance of the Truth of what is taught, should enable a man to justifie his account, without an Af-Surance of Grace too; since his very Assurance of the Truth which he believes is a Justification of his Account, for believing it. If you fpeak of an Account of our whole lives. it becomes you huge well to talk of my Confidence, who have your felf the Confidence to turn things against the plain Scope of my Discourse, against my plain Words, and (I much fear) against your own Knowledge. For where the only Question was of the Certainty of Protestant Faith, or (which is all one) of Christian Faith, upon your Protestant Grounds: an Account why your Protestants believe, who cannot tell whether Christ taught it, was the only Account that belongs to that Question. But what needs more? Are not you, I too, fully perswaded, while we are writing this very Controverse, that we maintain the Truth of our Faith by such arguments as can justifie us not to have fail'd of that: Duty; and if we do fo, cannot both us justifie our felves in that particular, and all who affent upon them, to God as well as man ? And cannot either of us bring a folid Argument to prove that Christ Taught what we hold. without being affur'd before-hand we are in the state of Grace, and shall be fav'd? Or, Is this any thing to the Council of Trent, as you pretend ? What paltring is this then.

then, to pretend, that no Controvertist can bring a Proof that concludes Christ Taught such a Doctrin, and so justifies them that adhere to the Truth it eviness, for fear (forsooth) of making men sure of their Justification and Salvation, and of contradicting the Council of Trent. A pretty fetch, to excuse your selves from bringing any Arguments worth a Straw to justifie your Followers, for believing upon them! Alas! you have store enough of them; but out of pure Conscience (we must think) dare not produce them, for fear of enabling your People to justifie themselves for not believing rashly; or for

fear of making them fure of their Salvation.

4. I had alledg'd farther, that till Protestants produce the Grounds which prove their Faith to be True, it cannot with Reason be held Truth. You put my Difcourse first in my Words, only leaving out those which did not please you, and then disguite it in your own. and laugh at it for being too plainly True: For plain Truth, it feems, is a ridiculous thing with you; and you are of opinion, that the more plain it is, that you ought to bring your Proofs, the less you are oblig'd to bring them. Thence you fart aside to tell us, that the vulgar Catholic has less certainty than the vulgar Protestant: because the one has only the Word of his Priest, the other has the Word of his Minister and the Word of God in Scripture besides. Do you think Catholic Priests are at liberty to tell the vulgar what Faith they please, as your Ministers may interpret Scripture as seems best to their Judgment of Discretion! when you cannot but know, they dare not teach them any Faith, but what the Church holds; nor does the Church hold any but upon Tradition? Again, You do well to fay your People have it in Scripture, or in a Book; for they have it no where elfe. And you know the vulgar Socinians and PresbyPresbyterians, and all the rest, have it as much there, as your vulgar Protestants, notwithstanding all you have faid, or can fay, and then, I suppose, you do not think they Truly have the Word of God on their fide, unless you think the Word of God says different things to different Hearers. When you prove that you and your Ministers have any Certain means of making it out, that the Sense, which by their explaining and catechifing they put upon the Written Characters, is truly God's Meaning, you will do something, make many Converts, and my felf one among the relt: Till then, to possess your vulgar Protestants with a Conceit of having the Word of God, is meerly to delude them. Sure you wanted a Common-place to furnish out your Paragraph, or else writ it in a Dream. For, * to tell me, that Truth * P. 5. can depend no more upon the Saying of a Romish Priest, than of an English Minister, when I tell you, it depends not on any private man's Sayings, is not a Reply of a man well awake. In two words, Bring you Proofs, fay I; the Saying, that is, the No-proof of a Minister, is as good as the No-proof of a Priest, say you; And the short and the long is; No Proof, I thank you.

5. But two things, say you, follow from my Position, Ibid. which you fear I will not grant. The First is, That if we cannot with Reason hold a Truth till the Intrinsical Grounds of it be produc'd, we cannot with reason hold any thing for a Truth, namely, because the Church of Rome hath determined it; for her Determination is no Intrinsical Ground of the Truth, but only an outward Testimony or Declaration of it; and then what's become either of her Infallibility or Authority to command our Faith! As slips of honest Ignorance deterve compassion and instruction, and I do not know this to be any more, I will be so charitable, as to set you right. Authority, amongst those who already admit it

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for True, has Force to prove that to be Truth, which depends on it, and will conclude against those who allow its veracity, if it be shewn to be engag'd against them. But it has not this Effect upon Human Nature by its proper Power as 'tis meer Authority; but, because Intrinfical Mediums justifie it to be worthy to be rely'd on. Whence, let that Authority come into dispute, it will lose it's Credit, unless it can be prov'd by such Mediums to deferve what it pretends to. And, hence, you fee we go about to demonstrate the Infallibility of the Church's Human Authority, in deriving down Christian Faith. To clear this farther, I advance this Fundamental Position: viz. No Authority deserves any Assent farther than Reason gives it to deserve: And, therefore, without abating any thing of our respect, we may affirm, that the Authority of the whole Catholick Church would be no greater than that of an old Woman; (or one of your fober Enquirers) were there no more Reason to be given for believing the former than there is for believing the later. And confonantly to this Doctrin, we declare to you, that, When Dr. St. comes to argue, either out of Authority of Writers, or Instances depending on their Authority, against Tradition; he shall be prest to make out by Intrinfical Mediums they are Absolutely Certain; or they shall deservedly be look'd upon and contemn'd as Inconclusive. By this time, I hope, you fee that All Truths are built on Intrinsical Mediums; and, that whereas you apprehended they would overthrow our Church's Testimony or Authority, such Mediums (in case we produce them) are the best means to establish it, and give it force upon our felves and others: As alfo, how it comes that the Church can oblige to Belief: which is not by a dry commanding our Faith, as you apprehend; but by having its Human Authority fo folidly grounded-upon Reafon, that

that it felf becomes a Motive able to beget, according to the best Maxims of Rational Nature, such an Assent in us, to this matter of Fatt, that Christ and his Apostles taught fuch Doctrins. But, what a put off is this? We fay Truth is not therefore Truth, because of mens bare Sayings or Authority; and therefore demand your Proofs from Intrinfical Mediums, (for thither it must come, e're it be known for Truth) to make out what you pretend; Your Answer, in effect, is, You are afraid to do it, lest you should destroy our Church's Infallibility and Authority. How much is our Church in your Debt, that the Care of Her makes you careless of those Souls in your own Church, to whom you owe this fatisfaction.

6. The second thing you fear I will not grant, is, A Judgment of Discretion to common People, with which P. 5. they may discern the Intrinsical Grounds of Truth. You gave your felf at first the Character of a scrupulous man; and I fee by this, you have a mind to maintain it. You know, that those who write and print; can have no design their Books should not be read; and you know those that read, will and must judge of what they do read; and yet your scrupulosity can fear I will not allow the Common People to judge of the Intrinsical Grounds of Truth, who take pains they may judge, put it into their power to judge, and out of my own, and fo cannot hinder them, tho' I would. Indeed, I think it no great fign of a Judgment of Difcretion, to pretend to difcern the Truth of Faith, by Lights that do not shew it to be True; and, upon such a Judgment I wish and labour People should not venture their Souls. But I disallow no other Judgment of Discretion; full well knowing, that the more Judgment a man has, and the more he uses it, the sooner and better he will discern, that the Dodrin of Christ cannot be securely learnt from those of

Your and Dr. St's Principles. But, Why all this? Or, How come I to stand in your way? Do I hinder you from shewing Protestants that They are Certain of their Faith? They allow a Judgment of Discretion, if it slick there, whether I do or no. But you cannot gratise Catholics with Proof, it seems, because they are against Judgment of Discretion; nor Protestants, because they are for it; that is, in plain terms, you will not prove the Certainty of your Faith at all. You conclude very conformably, that I* have set us all on even Ground: Yes, most Mathematically even: For I set Absolute Certainty on the one side, and Uncertainty on the other; and this,

in your Language, is even Ground.

P. 6.

7. Your next Paragraph fays, I fall upon the Certainty of Protestant Faith; which I hope easily to overthrow. The Reader cannot but apprehend now, that I am making Arguments against it, of which you know very well I did not think. Where do I fall upon this Matter! Why, I said, Suppose Mr. G. could not prove Protestants are certain, are they therefore certain? The meaning of which words is clearly this, that the Certainty of Proteflant Faith must depend on their own Proofs for it, not on any Man's being able or not able to prove the contrary, which is what Dr. St. would have put upon us. So that (to avoid proving, which was demanded) you put upon me the direct contrary to what I affirm'd, viz. That the Certainty of Protestant Faith does depend upon our not proving they have none; whereas I contend it does not depend upon it, What shifts are you put to, that you may escape this dangerous business of proving your Faith Certain. Well, but did I say true, or no? You trouble not your Head with such impertinent thoughts, but fall to prophesie what I imagin'd. This (say you) he first imagins, that all the certainty of our Faith is this, That Papists

pists cannot prove it to be uncertain, and that then I make fort with my own Imagination. Better and better! Not to take notice of your shuffling in, that Papists cannot prove Protestants are not Certain, which I am very far from imagining; because I said our not-proving the contrary, is no Certainty to Protestants, he will have me imagin it is their Certainty; nay, All their Certainty: when he knows I am aware, and confess they pretend to Scripture for it; and, p. 26. urg'd them to make out they had Absolute Certainty by It. The rest is, to tell me I play, and you will be serious: And your way of being serious, when you have chosen to fall upon this Question, whether Protestants, become Certain by our not proving them Uncertain, is, without saying a word

to it, to skip to another Paragraph of mine.

8. Where I had faid, that Any man may find it confest to his hand, by Protestants, that they bave no Absolute Certainty of their Faith: For which I cited Dr. Tillotson. And you tell me first, that Dr. Tillotson is an excellent man; and fo he is; for he excells even your felf (which requires a great Talent in your way of handling Controversie) in all your Arts. Next, to take your turn in imagining, you imagin single Dr. Tillotson too many for all the Traditionary Catholicks to answer his Rule of Faith, And I imagin, that Dr. Tillot fon knows the contrary: For I have been inform'd, Dr. Tillotson had the offer of an Answer, from a Traditionary Catholic long ago, upon condition he would contribute his Credit to get it printed: which he thought not fit to do. Since I perceive you do not know an Answer when you see it, unless the word [Answer] be in the Title-page, I will not tell you it is answer'd already, tho' I believe I can make it good: But I will venture a fair Wager with you, it will be anfiver'd, in his own Formal way, every jot as foon as Reason SCHID.

P. 6.

felfion That Protestants have no Certainty (no Absolute Certainty, if it please you) of their Faith, is to be found in the pages cited, or any other part of Dr. Tillotson's Book. If you do not understand English, I cannot help it; but any one that does, may find in the last of the pages cited. As far as filence gives confent, it is own'd by Dr. Tillotson himself: For it was laid before him by Reason against Railery, and with him it has lain these fifteen Years; and yet you would perswade us you see it

See Reason againft Railery, p.97.to p.1 14.

ter, p. 23.

not, nor I neither, if I may be believ'd against my self. Ibid.

9. Your Rhetorick, Sir, is very great, if it will do you this piece of Service; but let us hear it however. I had faid to Dr. St. p. 23. Tou feem to grant you are thus Absolutely-Certain or Infallible, by vertue of Tradition. Upon My First Letwhich Theme you thus declame. How ? confess we have no Certainty (no Absolute Certainty, I beseech you again)

and yet feem to grant we are Infallible, and that too by Vertue of Tradition. - Some people had need of good Memories. As if it were so strange a thing for Protestants to contradict one another, or the same man himself; or, that there needed Memory to observe what passes every day. By the favour of your Exclamations, Dr. St. did Dr. St's second fay at the Conference, that They are Absolutely Certain,

Letter, p. 14. that they now hold all the same Doctrin that was taught by Christ and his Apostles, - by the Divine Revelations contained in the Writings of the New Testament; and of those Revelations by the Universal Testimony of the Christian Church. And in his First Letter he did desire Mr. 6. to

Ibid. p. 15.

Dr. Sr's First Letter, p. 7.

prove that they have no Absolute Certainty as to the Rule of their Faith, altho' they have a larger and firmer Tradition for it than we can have for the points of Faith in difference. And Dr. Tillorfon did fay in his Rule of Faith, p. 118. We are not infallibly certain that any Book (speaking of

Scrip-

Scripture) is fo ancient as it pretends to be, or that it was written by bim whose Name it bears; or, that this is the sence of such and such passages in it : It is possible all this may be otherwise. Now, if one of those Writers do not feem to grant that they are Absolutely Certain, (or Infallible) and that too by vertue of Tradition, and the Other confess, that they have no Absolute Certainty of their Faith, English is no intelligible Language in England. If you think this a Contradiction, you may talk with your excellent men about it, and let me alone; till you can shew I talk against my felf by relating barely what others fay. Mult my Memory be blam'd, when their Judgments are in fault? For a Contradiction it is, if Abfolutely Certain and Infallible be the fame; which I both prov'd formerly, and it will come into play again e're long. However I only faid they scem'd to grant, &c. For the Tenet of Faiths Uncertainty, if I may speak what Ithink, is bearty in them; it's Absolute Certainty is but feeming; and furely, 'tis lawful to lay he feems to hold it, who in print avows it, whether he do indeed hold it or no.

ro. From hence you pass to a company of Traditionary Gentlemen; with whom if you have business, I have none, and think yours cannot be very great, since you take this time to dispatch it. You may dispatch with me, if you please, first; and say what you will to them afterwards. Dr. Tillotson, you say, in his Rule of Faith, p. 120. Sc. said great matters of them, and if I find them wrong'd, I have the liberty to vindicate them. I know you would invent twenty impertinent Tasks for me, so I would but forget the point in hand, and excuse you from proving. But how careless are you of what you say. One of those Authors was occasionally vindicated in the Letter of Thanks, and the notorious Abase of him, made

P. 7.

good against that Dr's Excuse, in Reason against Railery, p. 227. to p. 234. And were it feafonable, perhaps we should find the others abus'd too, or wilfully mifunderstood. But, What is this to our present business? At last, you conclude with a feafonable Warning, as you call it; That, if any Protestant shall begin to plead Infallibility by Vertue of Tradition, it will behove Catholicks in time to feek cut a new one. Why fo, I befeech you! This is as much as to fay, that, as foon as Protestants take a fancy to any thing that belongs to Catholicks, it is their own, and Catholicks must presently yield it up. Your reason is, because When both Parties pretend alike to Infallibility and Tradition, neither of these can be any longer a fit Medium to prove which is in the Right. What will be when both pretend alike, we shall see when the Time comes. But, Why must they, or how can they pretend alike? Can Tradition infallibly deliver contrary things? Why should Tradition be a Medium less fit to determine between Catholick and Protestant, which of them has right to Infallibility, when both pretend to it by Tradition, than a Deed to determine between Peter and Paul, which has right to the Estate, which both claim by the same Deed? Do their contrary Pretences hinder it from being feen whether the Deed be for Peter or Paul : or Tradition for Catholicks or Protestants? Or do you think a Protestant. to get Tradition on his fide, has no more to do, but to pretend to it. At this rate, Scripture cannot be a fit Medium for you, because all Hereticks pretend to it, and alike too. But it feems, that with you, when two pretend, One with Right, the Other without it, they both pretend alike, or with equal Title. Of which it was, indeed, feafonable to warn us; for neither we, (nor any man well in his wits) would have hit on it of our felves. Thus much in return to your present Excursion. But what's become of your proof

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Proof all this while Instead of bringing that, you tell me, I fall upon Protestant Certainty, of which there was not the least shew; that I speak against my felf; that Dr. Tillotson is an Excellent man, that he did not confess, &c. Out of which rambling Talk we are to conclude, That your Protestant Proof needs not appear; but to make us amends for this constant Neglect, you will needs give us a seasonable Warning, and that's worth all the Proof in the World.

II. Yet we shall have this Proof, I hope, in the next Paragraph: For you give me notice then, When your Certainty (Absolute Certainty, I pray you again for Dr. Stillingfleet's take) is once prov'd, no more is needful to confute our Infallibility, and that you are not afraid to undertake making it good, even All that I here call upon you to prove. And you do not raife our Expectations fure only to defeat them. Yet it bodes ill, that you would have the word [Abfoliately] left out a while . A motion which would make a jealous man fulpect you had a deligh to palm a Certainty upon us which will prove no-Certainty. But you are Absolute Master of your own Proofs, and may put in and put out what you pleafe. I for my part cannot confent to leave that word out because le is not fair to alter a word of Dr. St's nor possible, the were fair. For you and I cannot make him not have faid what he bas faid; and, tho we should agree to suppress that. Word amongst our felves, it will still be found in his Two Letters, do what we can. But, now we are thus far onward, itis pity to break for a fingle Word; and to give you your due, you begin to deathere very fair with us. We manifest, fay you. Very well! Now the Buliness is on the Hinges again ; and here is not only Proof, but Manifest Broof comings But what is it which you manifelt Why, the Certainty you have of Scripture and

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that,

that, after the Same manuar on we do our Rinte or Scripture. I know not which you means But I fee you need a good Memory soo as well as your Neighbourd: For you do not remember that Abfainte Certainty of Scripture is not the Point to be prov'l, the froid you foin the very page you cite I wan debat point, not too be more feverethan needs, and put Proce hands upon a Task which I told them withal They would find a hard one but from which while we both agree that Scriptute is Certain, I was willing to excuse themac Again; You longer that just before you wonden diar one for fan ing. Touleem to grant you are thus Absolutely Controlnon Infallible by wertun of Tradition and now Hollies, now manifelt your Certainty in the Jame manuel as me day and fire you do not forget than Owe manner of manifelling is by Tradition. But to lose no more time about that which is not the point, pray How feat them. Yet it bodes if ai haid wath a work of the

How Ways youthink you do sufficiently prove the Centuins ty of every Article of your Parth, when you flow it to be falled ly exempled on God's Word; and this being frewn, wone derful things will follow. In the mean time you freak Oracle and bave all the realdn in the world to think that you preve Jufficiently, when you failedly flow & recivery Absolutely Gertain you do prove when you folidly flem or prove; and this you might have faid with lefs Caremony if you had been pleaside For we can fee well enough, that when there is Proof, there is Proof tho our Experiation had not been forow'd up with your professions of Gourage to undertake, or Shews to perform. This is just to invite your Company, fay Grace to them, tell them you think you treat them fufficiently, when you fet Solid Meat on the Board ; and all this done fend them hungry away. Pray, when will that When of voirsibe?

P. 9.

When will the day come to which you will thew your Faithre be felidly grounded on the Word of God i Every Article, as you word it, (so bring it, I suppose, to your folid Endless way of Quoting and Criticizing) is too much at prefent We are not got fo far yet : It will be time to talk of This or That Article, when This or That Article is in Question. At present you're to show, if you can, that you have any Means, unless you take Ours to ground any Article folidly on the Word of God, You are to shew your interpretation of it is Absolutely Certain, and that God's Word means as you seach it does. Otherwife your Confident Talking will not hinder us from feeing that you wretchedly delude your Followers; while you are your felves truly Unterfain, whether any thing you teach there be Irwe, and Confeious that you And yet you would perfive de us I break the dans

13. And yet, the you have ferved as this wou have a feach to lay alie blame apon me, for being harden go you than the Laws of Disputation are I will have them he fays, prout two things more: Fire shat they are absolutely pertain of All This By the way I take for granted that by All This, you mean All which Dr. So aftern'd which was All of which I defind Proof wAnd Scenally Not only this but of all that indre which Out Saviour taught his Apolles Of this Charge I own the first half I did demand proof of Absolute Centrainty and that for All This; and shall persist to domandit will you how one she Dif prescion daw Book, which allows a Dispusation of what his pleases, and shale whether he will prove it low no when he has done ... Dr. Stilling floor did affirm, that Joy are Abfalurely Certain ; and abfolutely Centain that you now hald All the fame Doct tim that was True by Chailt & Dr. Si's fecond his applicate And of all thit, all olis Laws as Disputation Letter, p. 14. that I even read on heard of waltanome to demant proof:

And you shall permit me to believe there was something in the Wind, besides those Laws, which makes you decline to give it. I had been Logician good enough, if you had known how to have prov'd. Yes, but I make Absolutely Certain and Infallible all one. I make them all one! Why, all Mankind made them to before I was born. Take all the Men who precend to Absolute Certainey and all the ways by which they pretend . Authority. Demonstration, Sense, Experience, or what you will and fee whether all Mankind agree not, that when there is room for Decent there is no Abfolute Certainty: and let a man bretend to be Abiblately Certain as much as he will, if he be, or may be decerved he will be but laught at for his pains, and not thought Absolutely Certain by any man in the World, no not by your Reflecting felf. And yet you would perswade us I break the Laws of Disputation by understanding that Word as every body elfe does. Certainly, you would make a pleafant Law-maker for Disputation: For when you have forbid us to understand words as others do, we could dispute no longer, nor fo much as converse, for there would be no knowing one anothers meaning. Il A usom nov said TULE.

14. But if I take that word ill, how must I do to take it well? Not to mistake a second time, I would be glad to know how your self take it, who to be sure take it right. But this you keep to your self; and you have reason, if by Absolutely Certain, which I suspect is the true case; and must be, unless you would have to mean nothing. Otherwise, why might not we know what you will let it mean, if you will not let it mean what I and every body else think it does. Since you leave me to my self, I shall, at the hazard of incurring again the Penalties of your Laws of Dispitation, venture to think that He, who will not suffer those who are Absolutely

lutely Certain to be Infallible, will have them Fattible that is, Deceivable in that whereof they are Absolutely Certain; and for ought they can tell, actually deceived. And then he will have Protestants believe that their Religion is the fame ther is taught by Christ, fland firm, and draw over to it as many as they can, and vex and perfecute their Neighbours whom they cannot; prefer it before the Unity of the Church, and keep up differences in Religion with as much jealous Concern, as if the Wall of Division in the Church were the only safe Fence of the Nation : in a word, flake their Souls and Eternity upon it : When, all the while he cannot Absolutely tell whether it be True or No: nay, knows he cannot. Let him honeftly tell Protestants so ; and if they will venture Perfecution, and Schiffen, and Salvation on those terms, the Fault is their own, and he has walk'd his Hands: Otherwife, he deludes them shamefully. If they waver, and fland upon Security, they are told, they are Absolutely Certain, and this confirms them; for it is as good Security as Heart can wish: But, when it comes to be fifted, it appears they may be deceiv'd for all their Security and their Absolutely-Certain Religion proves to be such as perhaps is arrantly Falle. In short, they have a bare Sound to rely upon for their Souls. Call their Security Abso-Intely Certain, and tis good Protestant Doctrin ; but call it Infallible, (which is the same) and 'tis rank Popery, and your Protestants will none of it. And fo, they may if they will, and well if they will continue to be of your principles, be content with Sounds : But, if they will stand upon Security from Deceit, they must look for it where it is to be had : With all they can get here, it remains They may be Deceiva hoos a to love

own Invention, and as pleasant an Invention as ever ro-

ving Fancy Riggested. Absolute Certainty of Pantellant fatth was turn'd by Dr. Sv. to Absolute Cortainty of Occipeure. Since then, Protestains believe more than that Scripture is Scripture. I faid, they were to prove their Ablofute Cortainty of the more which they believ'd befides You have taken fuch exmaordinary pains to mistake me, as plainly as I expect my felf, that you fancy I would have them fay they we thus certain of those Points which they deny to be in Scripture, and think them to be added by the Council of Treat, and which, therefore, they believe not. And these Points you understand to be the more of which demanded Proof; and fo by your power in Reflection, to defire Proof of what they do believe, is to defire Proof of what they do not believe: Ablolute Certainty of what is their Faith, is Abfolite Certainty of what is wer their Faith mand their not Faith is their more Faith. Ridiculous Folly! To pretend we expected Protestants should prove to us fuch Points as they deny'd, and our fetves held; whence they could need no Proof to we and of they meeded any to others, it was certainly our proper Ducy, not rhairs, no preduce them. Mary, when they are hard put to it. have wav'd the confideration of Shame but 'sis a fail thing litterly to renounce Common Sence too. Wet. what is it you will not do? What abland protences not lay hold of wather than be brought to this oblious and thingdrous thing teall'd worms Al Yournefled diriyour Paragraphy with the Mivsay inchance good men who penn'd it, with the Primitive Change, and Primitive Creeds, and the Council of From, and this you call the-Mercit is to be had : With all there were it is obe lad :

us, Ton decline no Proof that it imambened you, as if it were not incumbent on you to prove what you fay.

You add, That we fee by this time - as if there were any thing to be feen in all your Reflections, but that they decline all Proof, and that with the most ankward shifts in the World, as, Because the Council of Trent had made a Declaration concerning Grace, p. 3. Because a Minister is as good a man as a Priest, p. 4. Because the Infall biliey and Authority of the Church of Rome might run a rifque, p.5. Because Catholicks and Protestants hit it not about Judgment of Diferetion, Ibid. Because Dr. Tillotson is an Excellent man, p. 6. Because we will not dispense with the word [Absolute] which was Dr. So's, but will needs take it in its natural fense, and not admit of your no fense of it, Hord. These and many other Rich weighty Reflections have been our chief entertainment; and yet your forugulous Modefty has the Confidence to fay you decline no Proof that is incumbent on you, when you have meamb dall the while, if that be the word on nothing but throwing out Baits to draw us from your incumbent Proof, to other matters. You talk indeed of Proof arlaft; and that which you fay of it, is, That you prove when you prove. Moreover, you blame me for defiring Proof of two things more; whereof One is the very thing your felves have made the point to be prov'd, and the other I never defir'd you to prove With this fluff you face it out, that Ton prove Scripfure to be the Word of God; which, if one should put you to it, you cannot; and every Article of your Faith by the Scripture (common words, which every Heretick may and does use); when I have been all this while folliejting with all the earnestness I can, to know which way you can prove any Article with Abfolute Certainty by Scripture; and you will not tell me, and I am fure, cannot. Though you have the Confidence to fay you do it, yet every body may perceive youknow you cannot. For

P. 11.

Thid.

vour very next words are, Thus we prove we bave fufficient Certainty of our whole Faith , which is to fav. You decline Dr. St's Absolute Certainty, nor know of any way to prove more than Safficient Certainty. And this fufficient Certainty of yours may be no-Certainty: For there goes no more to make a thing sufficient, than to make a man content with it. A Yard of Cloth will make a fufficient Garment for him who is content to go half naked : and a Table without Meat is a fufficient Meal for him who is contented to fast. And so, as long as you can prevail with your Protestants to be content without Certainty, you can prove they have Certainty abundantly Sufficient, because no-Gertainty will suffice. Marry, if they will infift upon having at least this Sufficient Certainty which you promise, I know not how you will do without Weights and Scales to weigh out your Certainty, according to feveral mens Exigencies, and make down-weight Sufficient, except they will take your word; for you have no more to give them even for fo much: But, for Absolute True Certainty, the only Certainty of which Dr. Stilling fleet spake and I demanded Proof, They must absolutely excuse you. Poor Prote-Stants, to be thus usid! That Emply Words and Colemn Outfides, and Confident Noise, should be offer'd to them. for Truth, and which is more deplorable, pass upon them! That they should not yet perceive they are but the Stratagems of those no-principled men, who impose on them. and fecretly laugh at them for their Eafinels ; and yet reflect not that they must answer one day with their fouls, for fuffering themselves to be fo impos'd upon. 17. From your Proving Talent you pass to your An-

*See my first Juvering Talent; and will try to answer a Discourse of Letter, P. 30 mine, in which there are but * Five Propositions. The First, [God has left us some way to know surely what Christ

bid!

and his Apostles taught.] This you grant to be a Certain Truth: and so there is one step of our Journey made. think you grant the second too, not that you positively fay I or No; for that is too precise & dull a Method for a Man of your parts: But as Plain Truth feems always ridiculous to you; you laugh at it for a foolish Inference, because 'tis so visibly in the Antecedent. You are not aware I perceive, that your Raillery is Complement. To be contain'd in the Antecedent, which you make the Fault, is the Praise of an Inference; without which it would indeed be good for nothing, or rather not be at all. For which way can an Inference be drawn from an Antecedent, in which it was not to be drawn? Would you have us draw Wine out of an empty Cask, or Beer out of a Jarr of Oyl. Again, the more we know the thing is where we would draw it, the furer our Draught. But you feem to be fo little acquainted with Antecedents & Inferences, that 'tis no wonder; by making them your fport, you make your felf the sport of those who de understand them. In the mean time your laughing is owning that the Inference is contain'd in the Antecedent, and therefore Certain, as you before own'd the Antecedent was. And so we are another step onwards; and might fo forwards without stopping longer, if you could have let my Proposition alone. But, you must needs be wording on't your own way, to shew that either you did not understand it, or that you had a mind to inform us how neatly and dexteroufly you could change and pervert words as well as Answer. My Words were: Therefore this way must be such that they who take it, shall arrive by it at the End it was intended for; that is, know furely what Christ and his Apostles taught. Your Words which you pretend equivalent to mine, are thefe: * [If God has left us * P. 12. a Way to know, then by that Way we map know.] Pray Sir,

do Tou take my fence, or fay what I do? Is frall know and may know all one? I fay that they who take the Way left by God shall, that is cannot chuse but know; as he cannot chuse but draw a straight Line, who draws it by a Straight Rule; and he cannot chuse but come to London who goes on the Right Way thither : If either could mifs. provided they draw by the Rule, and travel on in the Road: the Rule of the One is not straight, nor the War of the other Right. And, fo, I make account that the Way to know the Faith of Christ, is not a Right Way, if those who take it can fail to know their Faith; and therefore not the Way left by God. You barely fay, we may know with which it confifts we may not know; and for you make us a Way in which they who travel may be always out of the Way; which is well enough for a Way of your making; but it is certainly no Way of God's making; for it is plainly no Way. But leaving this little tryal of your skill; that which you fay to my Proposition (untallifyed) if you fay any thing is, that 'tis, indeed a little too wifilly, but yet true, and fo we may go on.

18. You Preface to the Third Proposition with asking, who I dispute against? and why if I mould be thought to dispute against you, I do not use such and such Terms? Two very pleasant Questions! Your own and my Title Page tell as many as see them that I am disputing against D. of Paul's; and yet you stand enquiring after the secret again, to ask why I do not use Terms to your mind, is to ask why the Defendant does not go to the Plaintist to draw his Answer. You shall excuse me from being beholding to you, if you please; till you have a better knack at making Arguments, for your self, you shallmake none for me, by my consent. But, where lyes the Quartel? You do not sure expect I should write to your liking; and if you think I speak not against you, and your party,

you need not trouble your felf with what I fay. What does not touch you, cannot burt you; to you may lay concedo totum, and rest secure by being unconcern'd. Yet you speak at last, and not till then, to purpose; when you bear the Reader in hand I pack the Cards, and you will P. 13. play fair ; tis that must carry the Cause, or nothing. To get the Readers Affection on his fide much imports him, who has nothing but fuch little Rhetorical tricks to trust to.

19. But, as if I had not the gift of Prophely to forefee with what a kind of Man I should have to do, I happen'd to propose first what I intended to prove, before I went about to prove it, which I thought was the clearest way. You at a venture take what comes first, and tho you faw it was my Conclusion which I inferr'd from the following Proposition, will needs speak to it before you speak to the Premises. This has so blunder'd all things, that the Reader will not eafily perceive what we are doing. I shall thefore, (as you should have done) mind only the Proof here, and referve the Inference till we come to the place where I made it. I put then to be prov'd that [Scripture's Letter interpretable by private Judgements is not that Way] viz. the Way left by God : and for my proof that [we experience Presbyterians and Socinians, for example, both take that Way of private Interpretation] viz. and yet differ in fuch high Fundamentals as the Trinity and Godhead of Chitt.]

10. You, before you answer, would have it thought You might ridicule me in my own Language. Never spare me, good Sir, nor balk your mirth for me if I give a just Occasion: But where lies the Jest? Why, I quarrell'd with Dr. St. for bringing an instance, and new bring one my felf: If this be all, I shall be tempted to be merry in my turn. Itold Di. St. he might undoubtedly have produc't My First Let. his Inflance if he had been arguing, but minded him that ter, p. 10.

his turn was then to Answer, and that his Instance was not an Answer, but a new Argument. And yet this is not plain enough for you to see that I faulted not the Instance, but the unseasonable Argument, as I should any other in such circumstances; and you would have it ridiculous in me who am arguing to do what I only excepted against, because he was not arguing; and freely acknowledg'd he might do, if he had been to argue. Sure you were in a pleasant humour, when you thought of turning me into ridicule, because your self understood not where the stress lay, tho' it were never so plainly told you. But to let this pass, as you say, with your causelessy gleeking Ressections upon Scripture and Tradition, what say you

to the Proof I bring?

P. 15.

21. Why, the force of my Argument (fay you) is this: If any men can be found who wrest or misinterpret Scripture, then can it not be the Way to know what Christ and his Apostles taught. One thing after another, if it please you. Talk of the force of my Argument as much as you will, but, e're you leave the Proposition before you, of the Presbyterians and Socinians, 'tis but fair to grant or deny I must intreat you too to leave translating my Arguments. They are New yet, and need no mending; when they do, I will be better fatisfied of your Skill in the Trade, before I become your Customer. By your next words, rallying against the Validity of the Consequence, I guess you grant the Antecedent; and fo, that care being over, we have nothing but the Confequence to mind. The Dispute would fall in more properly under the next Proposition which infers the Consequent; but now I am here, I will hear what you fay, before I pass farther. You fay then, That indeed this Argument proves nothing, but that I have no good opinion of the Scripture. Will this venomous Cant never be left? I think the Scripture too

good

good and too facred to be abus'd by wrong Interpretations, and labour to preserve it from them : You labour to keep it expos'd to that Abuse; Pray, which of us two have a better Opinion and more Reverence for the Scripture ? You proceed : Must a Rule be no good Rule, because some who use it misunderstand it and abuse it ? What may you mean by this? I take my Ruler, and draw a Line by it: Does the Straightness or Crookedness of this Line depend upon my Understanding? What is't then you call Misunderstanding a Rule? If you make the Letter of Scripture the Rule, and so private Interpreting the Ufing it, or drawing the Line, and the Sense the Line drawn : unriddle to us, if you can, how the Sense drawn from the Letter can any more fail to be True, than the Line drawn by the Rule to be straight; and which way that Sense can be misunderstood; and how the Rule can be a good Rule if it be us'd, and the Sense to which it is a Rule be misunderstood? Or, do you mean perhaps that 'tis with the Scripture as with a Grammar-Rule; where he who understands not what 'tis for a Nominative Case and a Verb to agree, may make false Construction, and yet the Rule be a good Rule. Tho' you should go thither for your Notion of a Rule, we should be but where we were. For, as the Grammar-Rule, let it be never fo ill understood, will make good Construction in case it be us'd; so the Scripture-Rule, if it be, as you put it, us'd, must needs produce right sense. But the truth is, a Grammar-Rule is not a Rule till it be understood; for he who understands not what 'tis for Cafes and Verbs to agree, has no Rule to make them agree: And, then, if you will make the Letter of Scripture fuch a Rule, you will make the Letter first understood to be the Rule of understanding it, and people misunderstand what they understand, and the mifunderstood Rule be a Rule, which is only a Kule

Rule by being understood. In short, turn it which way you will, you will (to borrow an Expression) be much bebolden to the Reader to make Sense of what you say.

P. 15.

22. You question on : Must a Way be a wrong Way. because some that take it will not keep it ? Riddle my Riddle again. Pray, who are or can be those some who take it and will not keep it ? As long as they take it, they keep it, I think; and they keep it not against their Wills fure. He who has no Will to keep it, may when he pleafes go out of it, but then he does no longer take it, and is none of the some of whom the Question ipeaks, (for they all take it) and to we have nothing to do with him. When all is done, the Will here is to no more purpose than the Understanding before: For he who takes the Way, shall certainly arrive at his Journeys end, let him Will what he pleases, and the Way must needs be a wrong way if he do not. Tis great pity you are not in the right; You would fave more men than the Benefit of their Clergy: For the Thief in a Cart, upon the Way to Tyburn, would never come there if willing not to keep that Way would keep him from it. But by affirming that some take the Way who yet will not keep it, you affirm that some do and do nor Take it. And to Dr. Sr. is well holp up with a Reflecter, who imagins we are talking of one, who only takes the Way at first, and afterwards leaves it; whereas 'tis plain, the Argument proceeds of fuch as make the Way their Choice, and perlift to follow no other to their lifes End.

Laftly, You tell us, that Till it be provid God has left fach a Way or Rule, as no man can possibly err out of it, mistake it, or aduse it, &c. For you must permit me to stop by the way. I am too short breath'd to run over the long period at a loose. But, let you alone to make all sure: You are safe enough it all must go on your side,

till fome body prove to you that no man can err out of the Way left by God, mistake or abuse it; that is, till some body prove that Ways are Prisons out of which there is no escaping: or that the man cannot possibly fall into Errour who is out of the Way to Truth. As many as leave the Catholick Church, leave the Way left by God: and you like a right pleafant man, would have it prov'd. that the thing cannot possibly be done which we see is done by millions; and would have us, who fay, they all do err and mistake, prove they cannot. All this while I a little suspect you mean otherwise than you fay; and that by your words, Errour, and Millate, and Abase of the Way, you understand missing the End of the Way, Truth. But let us fee what you will make of it: What would you have prov'd next ? Why That it is not enough that God has left us such a Way or Rule, as men may understand and observe if they be not wanting to themselves. What do. you call being wanting to themselves > I understand how a man that will not travel, or leaves a right and takes a wrong way, is wanting to himself: but he who puts himfelf upon the Way, continues on in it, and changes not his Road, is not wanting to himself in any thing I can imagin, which belongs to the Way: And the way of this. Traveller I maintain against you, has not enough to be a Way, if it barely may, and yet may not, bring him to his Tourneys End. What will this come to at last? Why, till these things be prov'd, It will not follow, that the-Scripture's Letter, in the fonfe you have own'd it, is not the Way, the not only Presbyterians and Socinians, but the greater number of Mankind should own it; and yet differ about Fundamental Points contain d in it. What you call the Sense which you own of the Letter of Scripture, will come by and by. But will not that follow which you: fay here will not ? Will it not follow, that the Way by which

which a man that goes in it comes to Errour, is not the Way to Iruth? Will it not follow, that he who at his Journeys End finds himfelfat Iork, did not go the Way to London? Pray, what's the Way to a Place? Is it not that Passage that he who has past it, finds himself at that Place? And so the Way to know the Doctrin of Christ and his Apostles, is it not the Means which he who has us'dknows that Doctrin? Why then, since Presbyterians and Socinians both interpret by their private Judgments, and one side knows not the Doctrin of Christ, it follows as unavoidably, that the Way of private Interpretation is no sure way to know it, as that he who has gone through the Strand, and finds himself at Charing Cross, has not gone the way to Moorfields; That is, as certainly as that a Way is a Way or Means to bring a man to such a Place.

24. What do you talk then of erring for, and mistaking and abuling the Way ? Or what do you moan? 'Tis true, those erring men do mistake the tree Way, and for that reason err. But they mistake not the Way which you fay is the true Way. They do interpret by their private Judgment, and so take, not mistake it; use, not abuse it. Sure you mean that they mistake the Doctrin of Christ; and, so, by mistaking the Way, you very wifely understand mistaking the End. And then, what a man are you to contend their way is a Way, and a fure Way too, to bring them to the Knowledge of Christ's Doctrin, when they purfue it and are not brought to that Knowledge? And what Eyes have you who perceive not that therefore it cannot be a fure way? Again, to what purpole do you tell us that men may understand and observe (as if Observing concern'd our Question of Knowing) if they be not wanting to themselves? when they who take a right Way, not only may, but must, and cannot possibly fail of coming whither it leads, any more than the man Which who

who goes down the Strand, of coming to Charing-Cross: and when men have no more to do with a Way, but to travel in it; and so cannot be wanting to themselves, in that respect if they do. Of the same batch is your misunderstanding and not keeping the Way. As if they who interpret by their private Judgments did not keep the way of interpreting by private Judgments. And tho' their Understandings be none of the best when they take that for the fure Way to understand by, yet that very misunderstanding is their understanding it to be the Way; and so they, even in your opinion, misunderstand not the Way, however they milunderstand by it. In fine, you amuse us with a company of VVords, which have a Sound: but either no sense at all, or none to purpose: And it remains, that, because a Way must bring every one that takes it to the End of that Way; and private Interpretation does not bring Socinians to the fure Knowledge of Christs Doctrine, which is the End; that, therefore Private Interpretation of Scripture is not a way to know that Doctrine furely.

25. And yet you can bear us in hand that this follows no more than it follows that because we feet men misinter, pret and break good Laws daily, therefore those Laws are Unintelligible, or cannot be kept, and must be thought insufficient to shew them what the Law giver expects from them. What breaking and keeping the Laws is brought in for, you best know that bring them in. Our Discourse is only about knowing the Doctrin of Faith, and not at all about Living up to it; and so has nothing to do with those who know, but will not keep the Laws, as is the case of most Malefactors. But you end your Discourse well I must needs say, and very suably to all the rest, with an Instance directly against your self. You see that Laws lest to Private Interpretation are, by all

Mankind

Mankind, hide a infuficient, and publick interpreters therefore fet up every where; and, from the Parity with them which are Infufficient, you conclude the Letter of Scripture is not Infufficient. Any body but your felf would have made another Use of this Instance. As God ean write much plainer than Men, when he thinks fir. and has more care of their Salvation than they of their Temperal Concerns; another man would have concluded that God did not intend their Salvation should depend on the privately-interpretable Letter of the Divine Law. which he left less plain than Men made the Letter of Humane Laws But you, it feems, had a mind to make your Discourse all of a piece. The best is, his now ended. & we are free to passon to the fourth Proposition. To which, because the force of Exceptions against an Inference before it be inferred appears not fo well. I referve what you fay against it, while I put it only to be he which is the End; that, therefor void

26. It is this, Therefore Scriptures Letter interpretable by private Judgments is not the way left by God to know firely what Christ and his Apostles taught, or furely to arrive at right Faith. And now I must look to my felf, for you pour out here your diftinguishing Talent upon me. If, tay you, by Scripture's Letter, he means unfensed Characters, then I confess Scriptures Letter cannot be the Rule of Way. There is one branch of your Distinction: and to the other, unless you will talk non-fense, must needs be, Stripture's Letter, meaning fenfed Characters, can be or is the Rule. Your words are, Tet if he can think it reasonable to allow as much to the Scripture as he expects we should allow to this Letter of his, that it contains good fence exprest in words fignificant and intelligible; we deny his Assumption that Scripture's Letter is not this way. As you have this Art, among the rest, to talk unintelli-

P. 13.

gibly, when you have a mind to't, in very plain English, I wish some Body would tell me for you, whether you take feripeure's Letter in this period for unferfed or fenfed Characters; for truly I cannot tell my felf. By the terms you put [intelligible] and [fignificant] one would guels you mean unsensed Characters; for [intelligible] imports what may be understood, but is not yet; and [figuifcent] what may be perceived by the fign, whether it he or no. And then you have made a fair hand of it with your fair dealing, who distinguish the word [Letter] into Characters infensed and Characters unsensed; and grant it to be a Rule in one of the two fame meanings, and deny it in the other. But you shall ralk sense for me, and mean Characters fenfest; and then lets fee how much you have mended the matter. A Character fenfed fignifies a Character with the fense joined to it: The source of the Characters of Scripture is the fense of God, and the fenfe of God is that which we are to believe. And fo. Scripture-Characters fenfed, figuity Faith it felf in conjunction with those Characters Now Faith is the End to which we are looking for a Way to carry us. To tell us then that scripture's Letters taken for sevsed Characters is this way, is to toll us that the and is the way to it felf; that the means to get Faith is to have in first a that, when we know it, we know it a that when we are at our Jourdays End, we are in the direct Read to it, and fuch fine things. which would tempt a man not very fond of disputing, to leave it off and betake himself to some other businels: For how can you or any think fit to vex poor controverfy all your life; when your very fense proves Nonfenfe: And yet it is not that you have not ferv'd a Prentithin long enough in the Mystery: But the best Shoemaker in the world cannot make a good shoe of Bad Leather. 27. Yet, as you are not a man to be discourag'd with

(32)

ill fuccess, you are at your Distinctions again; and tell us that, if by these words, interpretable by private Judgments, I mean the Scripture any way interpretable, as any private man may possibly wrest the words to make them comply with his own fentiments, or through Ignorance, and Laziness, and Neglect of such Helps and Means as are fit to be us'd, may misunderstand them, I must have a very bad Conscience, &c. As if the Question were about my Conscience. But you would say, I suppose that Scripture, so meant, is not the Way, and I say it is not too. Pray, what Conscience is yours, if mine be bad when I fay as you do ? But if my meaning be, that Scripture as it may be understood by a Private Man of a competent Judgment, using such Helps as are proper, is not the Way, you again deny my Assumption. Because it would render the Discourse unintelligibly confus'd to repeat fo many lines at every turn, I shall; with your good leave; fay in short, Good and Bad Judgments; understanding by the Bad all the qualifications of the First Branch, and all of your fecond by the Good: I take you then to fay that Scripture's Letter, as interpretable by Bad Judgments is not the Way; but, as Interpretable by Good Judgments is the Way. By this account three parts in four of Mankind at a modest computation; have no WWay. For fo many Bad Judgments there are at least. But, the main Point is, while we are enquiring which the Way is which God has left, pray what have we to do with the Judgments of men? Can they make or unmake it? Or does it depend on them to be or not be the Way he left, as they happen to be different? It is a VVay only fo long as good Judgments travel in it, and ceases to be a VVay affoon as Bad Judgments come upon it. A Way,

I think, is a VVay whether it be beaten by the Lusty or the Lame, the Pur-blind or the Well-sighted. And, so if

the

Ibid.

P. 14.

the Letter of Scripture, interpretable by Private Judgments, be the Way which God has left us, 'tis not the Goodness or Badness of Private Judgments which can make it not the Way. Wherefore, tho' you have chopt upon a Distinction for which we are beholden to you, for we might chance else not to have minded there are Good and Bad Judgments in the World; Yet your Distinction unluckily has no relation at all to the question. Nevertheless, it serves for Talk and Show, and bids fair to draw us from thinking what 'tis we are about, to wrangling about how much Brains go to a Competent Judgment, how much Pains to Diligence, and such very useful Disputes: which, if you had any, was in likelihoodyour Design. For sure you cannot but see your felf, that your Distinction is no more to our purpose than

News from Hungary or the Morea.

28. Again, your First Branch says that Bad Judgments may misunderstand the Letter of Scripture, and that it is not the Way to fuch ; which I think is to fay, that it is not the Way for that reason; for you do not, and I suppose, will not say that they may not understand it right, if luck ferve, let them be never fo Bad; but, because they may misfunderstand it, therefore it is not the Way. Why then the very reason you give why it is not the Way in your First branch, bars you from making it a Way in your Second. For all you fay of your competent and affifted Judgment, is, that they may understand it right; which is not denying, if it be not owning, they may likewife understand it wrong. And then, you may unriddle to us when you can, how the Bad Judgment, which may mifunderstand it, makes it no Way, and the Good makes it a Way, which may mifunderstand it too. You are strangely partial to Good Judgments, to make the Possibility to misunderstand Scripture's

ture's Letter exclude the Bad and admit the Good; and the Poffibility to underfland it right, include the Good and thut out the Bad. Thus men have, or have not a Way as they find favour with you, and as you like their Judgments. As far as I fee, your Favour is all in all. For, fince you make the Letter of Scripture a Way to Good, but not to Bad Judgments, there is no knowing when it is and when it is not the Way, till we know which must pass for Good, and which for Bad Judgments: and fo nothing can come of it till we have a Test to try them. Now, I am much afraid that your own Judgment is, like Bayes his Play, your only Test; and that you make account all goes right as long as People think as you do. Marry, if they chance to deviate from you, they lose their Judgments, or their Deligence, or their Proper Helps, or fomething, and stop up their way with their own Faults. There is no doing here without Scales again to weigh out the Brains which go to a Competent Judgment, the Pains which go to Ddigence, and the rest. Otherwise, we have lost Scripture and, for our Comfort, get your Word instead of it. For, if Scripture interpretable by a Competent Judgment be our Way, and yours be a Competent Judgment (which no doubt you Suppose as your First Principle) tis a plain Case that Tour Judgment is one Way: which in truth is the Sum of all. So long as we will believe as you would have us, we shall have the most magnificent words in the world, for our Souls. We shall albhave Competent Judgments from Nature, and Proper Helps from Grace. We shall (as many as will fland upont; have Abjointe Certainty, nay infinitely greater Certainty than Reason can afford. the Colord of Con. But, all is to be understood with the condition annext of trufting You for all. Otherwife we have neither Diligence, nor Judgment, nor Helps, nor

Certainty, nor Word of God, nor any thing in the world but Your Word; who yet cannot for your life make any

three words you fay hang handfomely together.

29. But I have stray'd after your Will-of-the-Wife till I have almost lost fight of our Point. The Question is, Whether Scripture's Letter Interpretable by private Judaments be the Way left by God. I maintain it is not : and prove it, because men who take that way err. For, I thought it needed no proving, that the Way left by God is not the Way to Errour. You distinguish twice: First the Letter into Sensed and Unforsed Characters; that is, if you make there any Distinction at all. Now the Proposition is of the Letter Interpretable, that is, not yet Interpreted, or which has not yet the Sense put to it, and so is yet unfensed. When you then diftinguish the Letter Interpretable, into Sensed and Unsensed, you make a Distinction, whereof one branch is not comprehended in the Notion to be divided. Tis just the same as to distinguish Learned Men into Learned and Unlearned; or Men into Negroes and Horses. Your Second Distinction is. of Judgments, into Competent and Incompetent, which is Twin to the former. I vouch't for Proof the Presbyterians and Socinians; men of very Competent Judgments: and who are neither ignorant, nor lazy, nor negligent, nor baulkany means or helps, which they judge can enable them to understand the Letter, or that you have, except that, for a Spiritual Guide (which, I suppose, is one of the Helps) they in likelihood use the Assistance of fome body of their own, not of Your Perswasion. But if one of your Protestant Guides be a proper help to your Protestant, a Socinian sure is proper to a Socinian. In short, they fall under none of your ill Qualifications, and when I speak of Competent and Qualify'd Judgments, you distinguish the Competent into some which are Competent,

petent, and some which are not Competent; and, again, the Qualify'd, into those which are, and those which are not Qualify'd. The fum is this, I ask whether the Unfensed Letter be the Way; and you answer, the Sensed Letter is: that is, the End is part of the way to the End. I propose you Competent Judgments, and ask if the Letter be a Way to Them, and you reply, it is not a way to the Incompetent. And so you, who, good squeamish Gentleman, fall into a Scruple at the very name of Cards, can play at Cross-purposes all along very freely, even when Souls are at Stake. I defire you to remember that I speak of a Way, which they who take, shall, and that furely, arrive at Christ's Faith. You talk of a way by which men fo and so qualify'd, may arrive at it. As if may be were any thing to shall and must be; or the quali-* My First fications of Travellers any thing to the way. I * fore-Letter, P.31. told I should have nothing but an unconcerning Return for an Answer: And you have made me, tho' against my will, prophesie anot bating so much of my Prediction as the scornful Jest. For there is the Mountain and the Mouse, and Reading a Lecture in Logick to verifie it.

30. You conclude with an Argument against my Conclusion: You, I say, who are Answering, and have nothing to do with Arguing. But, what would we have? Men who are uneasie will alwaies be shifting places. Allour earnest Sollicitations could not wring one Argument out of you when it was your turn to prove; and now it is your turn to Answer, you thrust your Arguments upon us unbidden. Nor is there any keeping you from falling into the same Fault with your Suppositions, that Dr. St. did with his Instance. You suppose then 1. That the Scripture is God's Word. And so do I too, provided you mean the true Sense of it. For a false Sense, whatever you think, is, in my Judgment, not God's Ward.

2. That it was written to be understood. Undoubtedly but not by every one, barely by means of the Letter. All Books are written to be understood: Grammar, for Children to understand Construction; Mathematical Books for those who will understand Mathematicks; and yet those Books without Masters will make but few Grammarians or Mathematicians. 3. That it is written for the Instruction of Private Men. Yes, but not for the only, or fufficient means of their instruction, barely by the Letter. 4. That they are concern'd to understand it. Yes again; and as much concern'd not to mifunderstand it. 5. That they may believe and live as it directs. not onely may, but ought. But, pray remember, that I directs no believing or living according to a falle fenfe. 6. That they have means left them of God for the Onder standing of it, fo far as it is of necessary concernment to them. Yes, and that Absolutely Certain Means, the publick Interpretation of the Church or Tradition. 7. And that, using those Means as they ought they may understand it. Never mince it with may; they fall and certainly shall understand it who use those means. From all you conclude at last. And thus it is to them the way to know furely what Christ and his Apostles taught as necessary to their fatuation. How! The way to those who use those Means! Why this is just as I fay. But what becomes of thole who use not those Means? Twas ill forgot when your Hand was in at supposing, not to suppose in amongst the rest, that Private Interpretation is the Means left by God for understanding Scripture. For, it publick Interpretation be those Means, as it needs must, fince I have prov'd that Private is not; the Scripture plainly is no Way to those who only rely on the Private Means to understand it. And your Protestants are much beholding to your Argument which shews that Scripture, interpreted.

preted, as they interpret it, by private Judgment, is no Way to them. And I were very unreasonable if I should take offence at your Challenge, which hids me shew, when I can, that your suppositions are Unreasonable or False. Not I, believe me; For I should be very cross-natur'd

to fall out with a man who takes my part.

11. Thus you have fry'd 'as you call it, to answer my Argument; and have succeeded (even in your own Judgment, I guels) very forrily. For had you been Confident of your performance against it as it is, you would never have thought of changing it, as you do here p. 17. Men who have put by a Thrust are not follicitous to instruct their Adverlary how he flould have Thrust. And yet you will needs be reaching me, how I should have done to have made (we work; that is, to have been fure to hit your Buckler. I mean not to lose time on your Argu-It were ridiculous for me to amule my felf with . what never was nor will be faid by any but your felf. No body elfe would have left out the principal Confideration using the Rule, and, so, coming to Right Faith by whire it. As if a Rule would make a Line of it felf, tho' no body draw by it: And a Way bring to the Journeys End: even those who travel mer in it. In a word, your Argument has all the faults of your Answer in short; and onely thews you can speak from the purpose more so-Temply and methodically, by way of Syllogism.

32. After you had thus nobly acquitted your felf in answering my short Discourse, you proceed in the same Method to answer Mr. G's Argument for the Infallibility of the Catholick Church. Which, e're I come to examin, I must first say something to your Prelimi-

naries.

33. You doubt whether I think it needs any Proof that the Church of Rome is Infallible. To those who resect

on the force of a vast Human Testimony, attesting notorious matter of Fall, and what Assent it claims from Human Nature in parallel occasions, I do indeed judge it does not fo much need Proof as Reflection, But, why should I think it needs no Proof against Ton; who, we fee plainly, have interpreted your felves out of your Natural Sentiments? Your reason, Sir, because I say 'Tis in vain to talk against one Infallibility, without fetting up another. Now it * has been demonstrated to you, and * Faith Vindinever yet answered, That Infallibility and Certainty are cated, P. 37. the fame; and Nature tells us, that All Discourse supposes fomething Certain, otherwise it may run on endlesty, and fo nothing can ever come to be concluded. How is it possible then to discourse against Infallibility, or any thing elfe, without fetting up and proceeding upon fomething that is Certain, or Infallibly true . By your constant jesting whenever Infallibility comes in the way, you discover your anger against it, because you know you can produce nothing that is truly Certain, to ground your Faith. Notwithstanding the vulgar use to say commonly, [I am infallibly Certain of fuch a thing] yet none laughs at them or thinks them extravagant : And must we be afraid to use the same Language in our Controverhe, because your Ears are so tender, or rather your Grounds to foft, they cannot bear it? If you will needs declare against Infallible Certainty; be but so candid as to fay still you are Fattibly Certain, and fee how your Readers will smile at your Folly: And yet you ought to own one or the other, if you be Certain at all; for there can be no Third or Middle fort of Certainty, which is neither Fallable or Infallable. Pray speak to this Point, and let's have a little Reason from you at least, and not perpetual Rambling and Shuffling. How can you justitie your felves, that you are not Deferters of Human Na-

time by affirming (on at teast supposing) there is no Lifettibility (that is, True Certainty) to be found among & Men? Batrayers of Christian Faith, while you leave it all capable to be a Lye : nay, maintain the full Sense of that wicked Polition [All Christian Faith is possible to be Fable] in Discourses directly fram'd for that fet-putpose! Blafobemers of God's Providence, in declaring and afferting that he has left less Certain Grounds for Faith, and confequently for the Salvation of Mankind, for which the World was created, and God himself dy'd than he has for cated, P. 37. other things of a trifling importance. Will it expiate for those Crimes, to talk cantingly here of an Infallible and Lizzing God, and his giving us His Word by Men endu'd with an Infallible Spirit; Sayings fit to take the good Women that are much pleas'd with Godly Talk in a Sermon, but frivolous in our Controverse! Who ever que-Rion'd that God was Litting or Infallible; or that he bas left us an Infallible Word? The only question is, whether you can fettle for others, or have your felf, any Absolutely-Certain way to know the sence of that Word which this Infallible God has left us. You tell us indeed tis plainly written; but that's the Question still. and the Point wedeny; and for which we are continue ally demanding your Proof, and fuch a one as may confute our daily Experience, affuring us, that 'tis not plain to Private Judgments. Yet this only important Point, you only name, then flide over it and retreat to your old refuge, that weak infignificant pretence of Sufficient Certainty, (by which, I suppose, you mean a Certainty that is neither Infallible nor Fallible) and tell your People, if they will take your word against their own experience, the Plainness of it (for 'tis that must give them this Security) secures them from being dangerously deceiv'd; then, as tis but fitting, follow again of courfe

P. 18.

* Falth Vindi.

[in things necessary to Salvation] and [using the Proper belps] which (as we shall see anon) will cost one's life to perule; and this you tell us, encourages them to take pains to be well affur'd of the Truth. Fine words, I must confess, if they had any Sense! Is it such a rare Encouragement to take pains to be well affur'd their Faith is True, when you tell them, that after all their pains they can never be fatisfied, but it may be Falle: that is, they can never be fatisfy'd that it is True? But, when all's done, and the Certainty of your Grounds fail you, your last refuge is. . that the same Infallible God who has given the Means, has affar'd his Bleffing to them that diligently use them. But this begs the Question: For, if the Rule you follow be not the Means ordain'd by God to arrive at Faith, you have neither the right Means, nor can you be affur'd of any Bleffing by using them; unless you can prove God has promised his Affiltance to those that use not the Means he appointed; or will certainly direct those to the right Place who take the wrong Way to it. Next, you fall into a Wonderment to hear me talk of mens being discourag'd -for want of an Infallible Guide. And I wonder you should bear me talk what I never spoke. Not one Syllable was there of a Guide: All my Difcourfe was about an Infallible Rule. But the Truth is, you are fick of any Discourse that fifts the Uncertainty of your Rule; and therefore car'd not what new pretence you started, nor whether it were a False or True one, so you could but get the Dispute transferr'd to another subject. Yet, upon this false pretence you run on with your Raillery to the end of the Section.

34. But, at last you have found Insullibility in Tradition, after you have been sent from place to place to seek it. Pray, Sir, who sent you? We, with whom you are discoursing, never directed you to any other, but to that of Tradition:

P. 18. .

ing of no Infallibility, but only that. Yet you triumph mightily, you have found a thing which was proffer'd to you we fought: and found it at last, which was both propos'd to you and urg'd upon you at first. What an everlasting Trifler are you, to confess to your Reader you have been running after Butterflies all this while, and could not once turn your Eye to the Question which was just before you, nay prest upon you! Well, but what *My First Let are my * words? [The Certainty of Scripture is from Tradition.] Do you deny this? No, you positively affert it; First Letter, p. 7. Let's proceed. [Therefore there is wa refusing to admit, that Tradition causes Certainty.] Do you deny this? How can you without destroying the Certainty of your own Rule [Scripture] which depends upon it, and withal contradicting your felf ! I added, [And makes Faith as Certain as Scripture.] Can you dony this? That is, will you affirm the same Virtue does not work the same Effect if the matter be capable ? Let's see now how you answer. Tet it may be this Certainty cames not up to Infallibility. Yes, it does; for the Certainty. here fooken of was Absolute Certainty, as was twice infifted on immediately before, from your own words, p.6. and I * prov'd it was the fame with Infallibility which you have never difprov'd; and fo, unless you give a better Answer, your own Acknowledgment that Tradition causes Absolute Certainty, forces you to grant we are Infallibly Certain of our Faith. But fay * you, The Tradition for Scripture was more Universal: Suppose it so, was not Tradition for Doctrin large enough to cause Absolute Certainty ! Or are not ten millions of Attesters as able to cause Abblute Certainty as Twenty ? Pray, consider a little the Vertue of Witnessing Authority, and the force it has upon Human Nature. When the Num-

ter, P. 7.

* P. 19.

ber comes to that pitch, that it is feen to be impossible they should all be deceiv'd in the thing they unanimoufly attest, or conspire to deceive us, their Testimony has its full Effect upon us, and begets in us that firm and unalterable Assent we call Absolute Certainty; and the Addition of myriads more adds nothing to the substance of that Assent, since it was wrought without it. But the main is you quite misunderstand the nature of a long Succeffive Testimony. Let ten thousand men witness what two or three, who were the Original Attestors of a thing, faid at first, and twenty thousand more witness in the next Age what those ten thousand told them, and so forwards, yet (taking them precifely as Witnesses) they amount to no more, in order to prove the Truth of that thing, than the Credit of those two or three first Witneffes goes. 'Tis the First Source of a Testimony, which gives the fucceeding ones all their weight to prove the Thing that is witnest to be True: 'Tis that from which the Largeness and Firmness of a Testimony, brought to evince the Truth of any thing, is to be measured or calculated. Since then the stream of Tradition for Doctrin had for its Source innumerable Multitudes of those Christians in the First Age, in many places of the World, who heard the Apostles preach it, and saw them settle the Practice of it in the respective Churches; but the Original Testifiers that such a Book was writ by such or fuch an Apostle or Evangelist, were very few in comparison, sometimes perhaps not past two or three: It cannot with any shew of Sense be pretended, that the Tradition for the several Books of Scripture is in any degree comparable in either regard to the Tradition for Doctrin. Your next Answer is, that This Universal Tradition is no more but Human Testimony, and that can be no ground for Infallibility which excludes all possibility of Errour. Pray

P. 19.

why not! If things were fo order'd (as indeed they are that the Testifiers could neither be deceiv'd in the Doctrin. being bred and brought up to it; nor conspire to deceive us, in telling the World in any Age that the new Doctrin they had invented was immediately delivered; then it was not possible any Errour could come in, under the notion of a Doctrin delivered from the beginning. But is not your Tradition for Scripture Human Testimony too? And if that can be erroneous, may not all Christian Faith by your Principles be perhaps a company of Lying Stories? You must be forc'd by your own words here to confess it : but I dare fay, your Parishioners, should you openly avow it, would hate you for the Blafphemy. You would tell them, I doubt not, as you do us, that Moral Certainty is enough to stand on such a Foundation : that is, such a Certainty as may deceive you, and, by a necessary consequence, may haste to overturn the whole Fabrick of Christian Faith. In the mean time let's fee how manifestly you contradict Dr. St. when you First Letter, should defend him. He avow'd * Absolute Certainty for the Book of Scripture, and this upon the Foundation of Tradition; and you tell us here Tradition can ground but Moral Certainty : Now all the World, till you writ, counterdistinguisht Absolute and Moral Certainty, which you jumble in one. But diffinct they ever were, are, and shall be; for the Word [Moral] fignifies a Diminution or Imperfection of Certainty, and [Absolute] plainly expresses the Perfection of it: whence 'tis Evident, that either you contradict Dr. St. (perhaps not without his private Order) or he himself. We shall have all words shortly lose their signification, for no other reafon, but to give you room to shift this way and that, when you are too close prest with Reason.

7. 7.

35. Now, fince Dr. 8t. had granted, that Tradition is

Absolutely Certain for Scripture, and I had prov'd that Absolute Certainty was the same with Infallibility, what My First Letshould hinder me from inferring, that unless some special ter P. 21. difficulty be found in other things that light into the same channel, it must bring them down infallibly too? Your Gifts of Interpretation expounds these Words of mine thus: These other things are things unwritten in that Holy Book. I do assure you, Sir, you are mightily mistaken. I never told you yet that all Faith was not contain'd in Scripture explicitly or implicitly. What I meant was, that the whole Body of Christs Doctrin; (and not only that fuch a Book was Scripture,) nay the felf-fame Doctrin of Faith that is contain'd in Scripture, comes down by Tradition, or the Churche's Testimony. But with this Difference, (as to the Manner of it,) among others, that the Church that testifies it, having the sense of it in her Breast, can explain her meaning so as to put it out of all Question to Learners, Doubters and Enquirers; which the Scripture cannot. Whence we need not fish for our Faith in the channel of Tyber, as your great Wit tells us; St. Peter's Ship, (the Church) that caught fo many Fishes at first, (the Body of Primitive Christians, who were the first deliverers of Christ's Doctrin,) hath stor'd up provision enough for the succession of Faith to the Worlds end. There we find it to our Hands. 'Tis your fober Enquirers who Fish for it among dead unsensed Characters, and in the Lake of Geneva; from whence to fave the labour of going thither, you and your Friends are deriving a great Channel to run into Thames, over-swell it's Banks, and drown all the Churches. Lacus Lemanus is your Tyber, Geneva your Rome, and John Calvin (the Prime of your new Apostles) your St. Peter.

36. All this is but prelude: But, now comes Mr. G's Argument, and therefore we are to expect now, how-

ever you but trifled hitherto, more pertinent & close Difcourse. The first Proposition was this: All Traditionary Christians believe the same to day they did yesterday, & fo up to the time of our B. Saviour. This you feem to deny in regard they may perhaps be so call'd from their adhereing to a Tradition which reaches not so high as our Saviours time, but only pretends to it, whither we only pretend to it or no will be feen hereafter, when the Fourth Propofition comes to be examin'd. In the mean time pray jumble not two Questions which are distinct, and ought to be kept fo. The whole Business here is about the ule or Sense of the word [Traditionary] & how we both take it in our present Controversy. Now that we both agree in the No. tion of [Tradition,] whence [Traditionary] is deriv'd, is evident by this, that we lay claim to fuch a Tradition as reaches to Christ, and go about to prove it; you deny our Claim, and endeavour to disprove it: But 'tis evident you deny the same thing to us which we lay Claim to: otherwise we mould not talk of the same Thing, and so should not understand one another, nor could discourse together; wherefore 'tis manifest we both agree in the Notion or Meaning of that Word, however we disagree in the Application of it to the Persons. Nor do we pretend in the least, what you would put upon us here, to inferr hence that this body of Christians that now adheres to it, did always fo; but only contend, that if they did not ever adhere to it, they must have deserted it and taken up another Rule, and fo, cease to be true Claimers of a Tradition from Christ, or Traditionary Christians. Moreover, we judge we have right to lay Claim to it, till we be driven out of it by a former and better Title: fince we were in possession of this Rule at the time of the Reformation, or held all our Faith upon that tenure.

37. The second Proposition is this: If they follow this

Rule they can never err in Faith. Whence follows the Third: [And therefore they are Infallible.] Your Answer Sir, to this. Can they adhere still to what was deliver'd, and yet err in Faith, if what was still deliver'd, was Christ's Doctrin. Your Answer is: His Friend tells us this is palpably self-evident. And does not his Adversary confess it too? Do not your felf acknowledge it in your 21st, and 22d. Pages, and fay you must lay by your Rea-Son, turn Romanist, and renounce your Private Judgment, if you did not grant it. And can the Reader, fo well acquainted with your shuffles, judge it less than palpably felf - evident, which your humour, fo restiff to grant any thing, tho' never so clearly prov'd, is forc't to yield to. Lastly, does his Friend only tell you 'tis felf-evident? Does not he prove it to be as Evident as 'tis that the same is the same with it self? And is not such a thing Evident by its own light, or out of the very Terms, that is, self-evident? Pray, Sir, when I prove any thing, let the Reader know I did fo; and do not thus constantly pretend still that I only faid so, or told you so. A pretty Stratagem to avoid speaking to my Proofs; but how honest let the Reader judge.

38. But, fay you, unless this Tradition be longer than it is yet provid to be, they may follow it, and err all along in following it. No doubt of it; if it fall short of reaching up to Christs, we may follow it, and Err by following it, as all Hereticks do in following their novel Traditions. That (yet) is a very pretty Word; for it puts the Reader into a conceit that we have produc't nothing from the beginning of the World, to the very time of your Writing, to prove our Tradition reaches to our Saviours dayes; and yet, if we challenge you that we have prov'd it in the very next words of our Argument, you can make your escape, by saying, that you are not yet

P. 21.

P. 21.

come

come to speak to that point, and that you meant no more. Who would think there should be such Vertue in a petty Monosyllable, as at once to disgrace us, and save you harmless! The second Answer to this Point is, Let it (the Tradition spoken of) be never so long, yet if they follow it not, they may err. Very good! The Arguers Words are, If they follow this Rule they cannot err in Faith; which implies, that, if they do not, they may err: and you say the self-same over again, with an ayr of Opposition, and there's an Answer for us now. As if to conform to your Adversaries Words were to confute him, any thing will serve, rather than say no-

thing.

39. The fourth Proposition brought to prove that this Tradition we lay Claim to, does incleed reach to Christ and his Apostles, is this, They could not innovate in Faith, unless they did forget what they held the day before, or out of malice alter it. And here lies the main Stress of the Controverly between us; for you have granted here, Page 21. 22. that were this Rule follow'd, they must still enjoy the same Faith Christ and his Apostles taught: and this Discourse is brought to shew they did follow it. We are to expect then that your choicest Engines must be set on work to baffle a Proof, which, if it holds; brings fuch dangerous confequences after it. and indeed concludes the whole Controverfy. Your first Attempt is in plain terms most Evident, & a most Unconscionable Falsification. After you had (P. 21.) recited this fourth Proposition, you immediately add. Our Author undertakes to make this out more clearly, & therefore we will hear what he faith for our better Information. P. 18. He asks, did Christ teach any Errours ? and so you go on reciting that whole Argument, which proves, that if the first Fathers believ'd what Christ taught, and the fucceeding

ceeding Sons all along believ'd what their Fathers did the last-born Son in the World believ'd the same that Christ taught. Pray, Sir, play fair above-board. You have directly falfify'd that whole Discourse, by pretending here that the words you cite were to make out that Fourth Proposition clearly, (viz. That we could not innovate in Faith &c.) whereas the truth of that Fourth Proposition was made out by me nine pages before (viz. p. 9.) and the Discourse you mention here, as intended to make it out, is found p. 18, 19. and levell'd at a quite different business: viz. that a Church could not adhere to Tradition, and at the same time erre, as you pretended we must grant of the Greek Church. Clear your Credit when you can, I charge it apon you as a voluntary Infincerity: but you shall never clear it unless by putting out your Reader's eyes, or perswading him not to use them. So that it seems let us bring what Arguments we will, you need do no more when they are too hard to answer, but apply them to a wrong Point they were never mean't to prove, and then 'tis easy to shew. manifestly they are frivolous and good for nothing. In the mean time, who fees not that your Cause as well as your Credit is run a ground and like to fplit, when you are put to fuch shifts! I wonder how this gross Fault could escape Dr. St's acute fight, if he perus'd and review'd your Reflexions.

40. Your Second Answer, or rather Cavill, is, that you could make as fine sport with the word [Notwith standing] as I did, but that, it seems, it spoils your Gravity. Yet you can dispence with that Formal humour very easily, as oft as a hard Point presses you, especially when you are put to Proving: nor are we now to learn that you can laugh at a feather, when you have nothing of more weight to say. But, where lies the

left.

Jest? I never excepted against the Word, but the mifapplying it by Dr. St. Who, when he was at a loss to give an Answer to Mr. G's Demonstration, very learnedly and advisedly thought it best to deny the Conclusion. Object an Argument of his own against it, and then bid the Opponent prove his Thefis (which he had prov'd already) notwithstanding his Argument. When you find me thus untowardly making use of That, or any other. Word, you are at liberty to except against me. In the mean time put this in the number of your Reflections, that when a man pretends to make sport when there is no occasion, he but discovers his own Folly. But the Point is, Can you make good his Logick in this irregular Proceeding? This is what we expected from a writer that undertakes to defend him. But the Task is fo insuperable, that neither your wonderful Learning, nor Dr. St. himself, nor all the World to help him can ever be able to do it; unless he can make the Schools renounce all Rules of Art, and Mankind their Reason. But what were my words that were so mirthful? Why, I deny'd that a Body of men could adhere to Tradition, and notwithstanding erre. Is here any occasion of fine sport? Or, cannot I use a plain word in the Context of my Discourse falling in na-turally, because he had misus dit unskillfully and inartificially? I fee by this fliding over it so gentilely. this is all the Answer I am to expect to my 10, 11, 12, 13,33d. and 34th. pages; where fuch Errours against all Methods of Dispute are charg'd upon the Dr. as would banckrupt any mans Credit who had not a large flock of it laid in beforehand. And all the favour his best Friends can do him to excuse his Person, is to refund it upon his Caufe.

41. But, tho it was granted that Discourse of mine

cited by you pag. 21. was so evident, that it was both Unreasonable and absurd to deny it, yet it must not scape without some animadversion. A Fault there must be in it, that's decree'd; and what should that Fault be, but that good one of being too Evident. And this, as was shewn formerly, is one of the new tricks taken up to evade Answering. When our Arguments are too clear to be baffled by any (even plaufible) Reason, being next to felf-evident, or easily reducible to it, to save us the labour you reduce it thither your felf, but first vilely deform'd, that it may become a fit Subject for your Jesting way of Confuting. We will grant him (lay you) it is impossible to prove that men have err'd notwithstanding they never err'd. Very excellent! But do you not grant much more; viz. that It is impossible they should adhere to our Rule, and yet erre? You do, and, in doing fo, you grant the whole substance of my Discourse. And so let them laugh that win. I am sure you have lost by this forc't Confession, that Tradiction is a certain Rule, and that I have prov'd it evidently. Which no man will grant of your Rule that is in his wits, nor can the wit of all the men in the World ever prove it to be fuch as you have yielded ours to be.

42. The same disingenuity often repeated gives all the force to your next Sect. For, 1. *You pretend we *P. 222 but suppose it hitherto, that these Traditionary Christians adhere undecliningly to a Tradition descending really, and invariably from Christ and his Apostles, &c. How! only suppos'd hitherto! Was it not prov'd, and not barely Suppos'd in the Fourth Proposition, and made good by me, p. 9. If you will not come up to it, but stand hovering, fencing, jesting, falsifying and capering about by the way, must we be blam'd as barely supposing it hitherto? 2. You falfify our words: For who ever faid

a Supposition is Self-evident, which every one sees, while its barely a Supposition, is not Evident at all. Why quote you not the page where we fay this? Because you would not be caught. 3. You falsify again without care of credit or regard to your Reader, in affirming, that from this felf-evident Supposition I necessarily conclude thus ; Suppose Traditionary Christians neither did nor could erre, it is certain they neither did nor could erre. But why again no place quoted! Because you had again falfify'd it, and durst not hazard discovery. 43. I perceive, your play here (p. 22.) is to disjoint

our Discourse, and jumble all the pieces of it confusedly

together; and, fo, it must be my Work to rectify what you had so industriously unravell'd. Since then Mr. G. had made use of these words [Traditionary Christians] their Sense was first to be explain'd, and therefore I * My First *declar'd that the meaning of them was, fuch Christians as proceeded upon an Immediate Delivery not only at present, or fince the Council of Trent, or some hundreds of years before, as you put upon us, p. 20. but upwards till Christ's time; and all the advantage I gain'd thence was that in case they did not adhere to it all along, it would follow that the pretended Traditionary Christians (our felves) were not really such, and so the Subject of our Diffpute would be loft, and we flould receive a perfect foil. Could any thing be clearer or more candid? Yet. how many shuffles, and baifling Jests, you have been pleas'd to bestow on us instead of admitting so clear a Proposition; to how many wrong ends you have apply'd it, never thought on by us, we have already feen. For the Truth is, you are fo horribly afraid of any connected Difcourse, that you dare not so much as suffer it to peep out, but it alarums your Jealousie; no, not

the

Letter, p. 8.

the very fignification of the fingle words to be diffinctly known, or the most Evident Proposition, tho'it be Indifferent to either Cause, to be admitted. Now let's fee what you fay to it; you make it amount to this: Suppose Traditionary Christians neither did nor could err. it is Certain they neither did nor could err. Which you call my necessary Conclusion from my felf-evident Supposi-You improve mightily, Sir, in your Talent of Infincerity. Our entire Discourse runs thus, if we must needs put it into Form for you. Those who adhere to Tradition all along from the beginning, neither did nor could err in Faith, (otherwise they would not be Adherents to Tradition or Traditionary Christians). But this Body of Christians, call'd The Roman Catholick Church, does now, and did from time to time adhere to Tradition, Therefore this Body of Christians, call'd The Roman Catholick Church, norther aid or could err in Faith. This is Mr. 6's Argument: The Major is granted by your felf. The Proof of the Minor is contain'd in Mr. G's Fourth Propofition, which I have shown to be valid in my First Letter, p. 9. and the Discussion of it is now under hand. The Conclusion is in greatest danger, lest you should according to the new True-Protestant Logick, deny it again, and bring some Instance against it; otherwise, fince it follows evidently, it will shift well enough This, I fay, is our intire Discourse : all the rest is your flashy Drollery, your ever faithful Friend, when you are perplext how to Aulwards hour on a

Tradition from Christ's time, runs thus. They could not innovate in Faith, unless they did forget what they held the day before, or, out of malice, alter it. To en- * My First force this Argument, I discours d * thus. Jou do not, I Letter, P. 32. Juppose, desire we should prove that men had alwaies Mer

* P. 21, 22.

mories.

2 Tim. C. 2.

V. 16, 17.

mories, or that Christians were never maticious enous had damn themselves and their Posterities withingly and vet, it can flick no where elfe, Yet you are fuch a bold Undertaker, that you will needs prove they may be both thus Forgetful and thus Malicions. A hard Task one would think; especially fince the Argument proceeds upon Forgetting and Aftering what they Remembred and Held Tellerday. Your Fifft Reafon to prove they might be thus Forgetful, is : because Otherwife it is hard to fay why the Penimen of the Scripture should have been at the needless pains to write it. Let's apply this to the Argument, and your Discourse is this. Tis hard to fay that Christians could have re membred their Testerday's Paith, had not Scripture been writ. Now, pray Sir, be ferrous, and rest us Do you think there is any danger, or even possibility of this among the very Processants in England, the they had never a Bible to read to marrow . How many of them read not to much as a Chapter in three or four days. how many not in a much longer time; nay, how few of them read all their Faith there in a Year, or even in their whole Life and Jet fley tetail the memory not only of their reflections, but last Tears fairn. What a weathers is this tae rappore Miracles must be done for no other end, but that you may answer our Argument. The Reasons why Scripture was writ, you might have read in St. Paul to Timothy; where there is no such thing as to make men remember their Tefferdays taithy not that Scripture is of Mecellicy at all but only that is Profitable for many thes there enumerared Your Second Argument to confute our Demonfirstion, is a Text, 2 fer. r. 13. by which you will con-Wow more men wo remember their Tellerdays Faith : mories. for

2 Tim. c. 3. v. 16, 17.

P. 23.

My First Letter, P. 22.

for this Degree of Memory only the Argument infifts on. But what fays that B. Apostle? I will endeavour, that you may be able after my Deceafe, to have thefe things alwaies in remembrance. Now, there is not fo much as one Word in the whole Chapter concerning the remembring or forgetting their Faith, much less the Faith they held Testerday; or leaving their Faith in Writing for that purpose, but only (Faith suppos'd) of remembring his particular Exhortations to Good Life and. by thus inculcating them, to fir them up (as 'tis faid, w. 11.) to Christian Virtue, and leaving such things in Writing to that end. Now, fuch Spiritual and Moral Inflructions are both eaply Intelligible, especially, fince he had raught the fame to them formerly; and Man's Natural Corruption making even good men apt to flide back from the high degree of Perfection in which they had been educated; no doubt a Letter left by that Holy Apolle, now near his death, as he there tells them, would trike them more feelingly, and excite them more effectually to purfue that Course of Holy Life, in which he had instructed them. What miserable Stuff is this? Would not Faith have an excellent Bahs, did it depend on Scripture interpreted by your Private Indements. When this one Instance manifelts, you have the boldness to quote Scripture for any thing, tho' never fo disparate and unconcerning, and then blasshemoully nick-name it God's Word, when 'tis nothing at all to the purpose. But, I besetch you, Sir, let's have the Return of one Scholar to another. H our Argument Ive too open, or the Connexion in it be too flack, speak to it as you ought; but think not your Private Interpretations a competent Solution to Demonstrations. If such wretched Answers may serve the turn, the Schools and Universities may that up Shop, H 2

Shop, and Reafoning bid adien to the World: Every Fap will find a Text he can hook in, nor will he fail of interpreting it blindly to bis own purpose, when he is gravell'd with an Argument; and of calling it God's. Word when he has done. Who will not see you are finking, when you catch at such Straws and weak Twigs

to keep you above Water. 19170 ...

45. By this time the Reader will be fatisfy'd, that Notwithstanding all-you have answer'd, Men had Memory enough not to forget their Testerdays Faith . Next. you go about to prove Christians may be malicious enough to alter it. May not Christians (fay you A:23.) through malice and wickedness, be as eareless of preserving the Faith, as in maintaining Holiness in themselves or their Posterity, when they know that Sin is as damnable as Errour ? Be Judge your felf. Do not many of your Congregation (and the like may be faid of all Sects) fin often, and yet few or none of them defert their Faith once? The reasons why the Parallel holds not, are these. I. Sins are generally private; at least, Men do for the most part endeavour and hope to conceal their Faults, for fear of shame and discredit. But the Change of Faith must be profest and open : otherwise it alters not the case; and Posterity will still believe on according as things appear outwardly. 2. Sinners are feldome Malicious to that degree, as to refolve firmly to perfift to the end of their Lives; but generally fall out of frailty, and intend and hope to repent. And to this very thing will oblige them still to hold to their former Faith, which (as Experience tells them) furnishes Sinners with means of Repentance. 3. Man's Nature being inclin'd to Truth, scarce one mantells a Lye, but hopes to cloak it. But here, when they deliver another Faith for the same that was held Testerday,

day, every man must know his Neighbour to be an abominable shameless Lyar; and the Concern being fo Sacred, must hold himself and all, his fellow-Alterers the wickedst men living. Unless it be faid they went conscientiously upon some other ground than Tradition; for to pretend to be fav'd by Tenets held upon no ground at all, is absolutely impossible to consist with Rational Nature. But its impossible they should take up another Ground: Because if they could not innovate in Faith, they could not innovate in that upon which they held all their Faith. Nor could they be certain, but all their former Faith might be renounc'd, if a new Rule of Faith were taken up. To hear of which, could not confift with the temper of Christians, to bear a loss for all their Faith. Besides, Men are more tenacious of their Principles, especially if they have gain'd a vast Credit by their long Continuance, than they are to refinquish all they have receiv'd upon those Principles. Again, Tradition is the Authority of the whole Ecclefia Docens, the Chiefest part of (I might say the Ecclesia Credens too) witnessing the deliver'd Faith; which is fo vast a Body, that it could never (were there nothing but its own Interest) permit it self to be thought to have attefted a Lye hitherto: Add, That none could be competent Judges what was fit to be a Rule of Faith. but They who were fo concern'd both in Duty and Interest, Tradition should not be set aside. Which confiderations clearly evince an Universal Change in the Rule of Faith; and this over the whole Body of Believers is absolutely impracticable. Lastly, There must be some great time between their discarding Tradition and espousing a New Rule; during which time, we must imagin the whole Church (except perhaps fome few that discourse it first) would be made up

of Seekers; some hovering one way, some another in which case they would as yet have no Fairb, and consequently there could be no Church. 'Tis left then, that if they could innevate in Faith, they must pretend to Tradition still when they had evidently deferted it; that is, they must profess to bold the Peterdays Faith. when all the World must fee, and every man's own Heart must tell him the contrary: Which is the highoff Impossibility. Luther alter'd, Calvin alter'd, fo did many others; but none of them had the face to fay they still adher'd to Tradition, or the Faith deliver'd immediately before, and that they had not alter'd.

4. Men fall into Sins through Temperations, and Temptations are various, according to mens Tempers and Circumstances; whence it happens, that one falls into one fort of Sin, others into another, as things light, But 'tis impossible there should have been Causes laid in the World, to Universal, as to reach a whole Body of men confilting of fo many Millions of different Countries, Tempers, and Circumffances, fo as to impel them effectually to fall into the fame Individual fort of fin, and this fuch a horrid and flameful one, viz. The Altering the Fairly they hop'd to be fav'd by, and this fo fuddenly. The Nature of the thing shows evidently 'tis above Chance ; and the very Interest of the World would forbid fuch a Conspiracy, were there neither Religion, Conscience, nor Common Humanity in it. Their very Passions, Disassections, and Enmity to one another, would make them dilagree in carrying on fuch a wicked Project : Their Natural Tempers, abstracting from their Common Propension to Truth, and the care of preferving their Credits utterly lost by speaking fuch open and pernicious fallhoods, would render them apt, out of a meer Antipathy of Humour,

to oppose one another; and all this, supposing there were no Goodness at all in the World to Suppose which; evacuates all Christian Motives, and their Effieacy, and makes our dear Saviour preach and dye in vain : effecially, fince there never wanted , no, not even in the worlt times, a fair Degree of Disciplin to apply those Motives. Nay, State Interest, or the Quarrele of Princes, would make them glad to take hence an Advantage against their emulous Neighbours; and to think it the best Policy to lay hold on fuch an occafion, to fight in behalf of Falth and Common Honefty, against a pack of shameless Lyars, and Deferters both of Religion and Human Nature, who car'd not what became of their own Salvation, or that of others. Laftly, These Causes thwarting the Universal Alteration of Furth, while Christians proceeded on the former Rule of Tradition? and full as much hindring the taking up 2 New Rule in opposition to the Tellimony of the Univerfal Church as there could be no Caufe to make men confoire to alter the Tefferdays Faith, fo Christian Morroes, which contain the greatest Hopes and Fears imaginable, the Hopes of never-ending Blife and Fears of Eremaliand Intelerable Milery, which were behev'd and apply'd to the generality of Christians, could not, on the contrary fide, but influence them most powerfully to preserve unchanged and inviolate both the Rule and the Faith. Pis as Certain then, that a very Great Body of Helherers to Tradition, and confequently to the first deliver'd Taith, would fill re man on Root in the World, as that Effetts could not be without Proper Gaufes, or that Morives, which are the Broper Causes to work upon Rational Nature, will produce cheir Effect : I mean hich Morives as engage their very Marting Add, What fuch a Change Milly needs

2. 22.

needs have been publickly known; and, so, have excited the Pens, Tongues, Interests (perhaps swords soo) of the Traditionary and Innovating Party one against another, at the time of the Change; as we see has happen'd in our late Alterations or Reformations. Yet no such thing was ever mentioned in History; or come to us by Ira ition; or any thing alledg'd, but some differences amongst particular spectators, and their Adherents siding with them; which amounts to nothing comparable to that Universal and most Memorable Concustion, such a vast Change as this we speak of, must needs have made in the whole Body of the Church.

46. Summing up then this Discourse, 'tis manifest you have no way to answer our Argument, but by supposing there was a time (the Lord knows when) in which there were no considerable Body of Men in the World, either good Christians, honest men, or valuing their Credit; but only a company of brutish, Godless Lying Russians, without the least Degree of Grace or Shame in them. Unfortunate Consuter! Aristotle looks upon things as they were; Plato on things as they should be; but, to make a show of an Answer to our Argument, you would have your Readers look upon the Christian World, as it neither is, was, should be, or can be.

P. 23.

47. But you object. What if all Sons did not une derstand aright all that Fathers had Taught them to Answer. If all did not, most of the Intelligent and Passours, who were of greater Authority than those, some less-understanding Persons, and ty'd by their Duty and Office to instruct their Ignorance, would and could easily do it, when the Doctrin, open Practice and Disciplin of the Christian Church was settled, and made it both

both fo obligatory and fo easie. 2. What if some Sons were so negligent as to take no care either to remember or teach what they had been taught by their Fathers? Answ. If only some were so, then those who were diligent to do this, would reprehend them, and fee to have things amended, and those careless Persons, especially if Pastours, reduc'd to their Duty; there being Orders on foot in the World to oblige them to it. Besides, 'tis an unheard-of Negligence, not to know or remember the next day the Faith they field the day before; nor did it require that care you pretend to retain the remembrance of it four and twenty hours. 3. What if some, through Ambition, Vain-Glory and Popularity, fet a broach New Doctrines, and taught them for Apostolical Tradition ? Answ. If only some were so, then those others, who were good Men, and free from those Vices, would fet themselves to oppose them, make known their falle pretences, and lay open their Novelties: Both Reason assuring us, that Good men use not to be fo stupidly careless in such Sacred Concerns: and History informing us they were ever very zealoufly vigilant to oppose Hereticks, when ever they began to vent their Pestilent, Doctrins. 4. What if others, to fave themselves from Persecution, conceal'd part, and corrupted more of the Doctrin of Christ by their own Traditions, taken not from Christ, but from their Forefathers, Jews or Gentiles? Then those who were out of Perfecution, or valu'd it not fo much as they did their Conscience, would oppose their Unchristian Proceedings: Then the Fathers, Doctors, and Pastours of the Church would reveal what they had conceal'd, restore what they had corrupted, and manifest that their Pretences and Subterfuges were Falle, and that the Doctrin they subintroduc'd, had not descended by the open Channel of the Christian Church's Tradition. 5. What

P. 24.

if some through a blind Zeal, ignorant Devotion, Super-Stitious, Rigour, and wain Credulity, added many things to the Doctrin of Christ; which by degrees grew into more general esteem, till at last they were own'd, and impos'd as necessary to be believ'd and practifed? Answ. It they belong'd to Faith, they could not come in, while the Rule of Tradition was adher'd to, as has been prov'd and granted: Tho perhaps fome Points involv'd in the main Body of Faith, yet fo particularly or univerfally known, might, on emergent occasions, be fingled out. defin'd and more specially recommended than former ly ; without any Detriment to the Faith received, but rather to the Advantage and farther Explication of it. And, as for unwarrantable Practices, as they belong not to Faith, fo they do not concern our prefent bufinels. 6. What if Errour any of these Ways brought forth, grew, multiply d. spread, obtain'd most power, and drove out all that held the naked Trush out of all those Countries where it came ; Of which all Histories furnish us with Instances. Answ. But does any History tell your this Errour foread over the whole Church, without your supposing the Question that fuch or such a Tener is an Errour which you pretend fuch; which is above the Skill of Historians to decide; and is only to be determin'd by examining First who have, who have not a Certain Rule of Faith Belides, Errour in Faith never yet appeared; even though abetted by Great men in the Churchy but it was oppos'de and Truth grew clearer by the Opposition made to it; and tho" for a while it grew under the shadow of fome Particular State, yet no History ever recorded, that all the States of Christendom ever joyn'd to protect it.

our Argument, which infiles on the impossibility of Atte ed of the Christian Church's Tradition

ring the yesterdays Faith, but either out of want of Memory, or out of Malice? Apply them to this, and they lote all their force, how plaufibly foever a witty man, that talks at rovers, supposes all to be Errour, which the Revolting Party Held, and never confiders the Nature of Christian Mankind and their Circumstances, may descant upon it: For what Paradox is there, tho' never fo ridiculous, that Wit discourfing thus wildly and at randome, cannot make plaufible? Our General Objection then against *your whole *P. 23. 24. Paragraph is this, that you never apply your feveral What ifs? to our Argument. Belides, that you pretend in the beginning of it that you will shew other Reasons of such an Alteration, which are neither Forgetfulness nor Malice; and yet most of those you here affign are Defects of Goodness, which implies some degree of Malice, and some of them, the highest Malice that can be and varied the land the

49. But (fay you) we must seek out a new Medium to prove our Church Infallible, for this already brought, proves only she does not err so long as she holds to Tradition; but still the may err, if the leaves it; wherefore we must prove she cannot leave Tradition, or else She is not Infallible, and so we are but where we were. And do not you fee this is already prov'd to your Hand? For (not to repeat the many Reafons produc't for this Point, Sect. 45.) Innovation and Tradition being formerly and diametrically opposite, what proves the could not Innovate, proves also that the could not leave Tradition; for this were to Innovate. And this, our Argument you fee has already prov'd: nor is the force of that Proof weaken'd by any thing you have hitherto faid. I wonder you should differnble a thing fo obvious, and run forwards upon that affected

P. 23.

affected Inadvertence of yours, as if it were a business unthought of by us before, and required a new Medium, whereas it is the very thing our Argument chiefly aims at: and for which, we had of our own accord, without any one's bidding, made provision for before hand.

P. 25.

50. Your next Sect. P. 25. would perswade us rather to prove our Church free from Errour, which (fay: you) is a much easier task, if she be so, than to prove Her Self Infallible. Very Good! Your wife advice amounts to this, that you would have us prove our Conclusion without beginning with our Premises, or Principles. If this be Yours and Dr. Sr's Logick, 'tis a very preposterous one; and can only be made good by a Figure call'd Hysteron Proteron, or Cart before Horse. Though I must confess it keeps decorum, and is perfectly of the fame hue with all your Logick hitherto. Please then to know that all our Faith may be Errour, if the Teff mony of the Church, (our Rule) may be Erroneous: and, if it cannot, nothing we hold of Faith can be fo. Again, what mean you by our proving her free from Errour ? Your meaning is, we should only prove she Embraces no Errour now; but what Provision would this make for Her not falling perhaps into Errour to morrow? We ought then to prove (and fo ought you too of your Rule) that if we adhere to it, it can at no time permit us to Err; which could not be if at any time it might be deceiv'd it felf, or leave us deceiv'd while we follow it. Besides, if it were granted Fallible or Liable to Errour, by what more evident Light, or greater and clearer Testimony could we guide our selves to know when it did actually Err, when not in deriving down Christs Doctrine Or by what more certain Way could we be directed to arrive at Christ's sence. If there were

any fuch, It and not Tradition ought to be our Rule, We return you then your Counsel back with many Thanks, for it neither fuits in any degree with Logick, Common Sense, our own, or any other Principles. But however it fuites better with your convenience, than these crabbed Demonstrations: For you tell us One fingle Instance of her erring is enough to Answer all the Arguments can be brought for her Infallibility. Sure you have a mind to convince all Schollars that read your Books, you never heard of Logick in your Life: Or elfe you would endeavour to baffle the whole Art of Discoursing, because you foresee 'tis like to baffle An Instance may perhaps make an Objection against the Conclusion taking it fingle for a meer proposition and not as standing under Proof; but Arguments are answer'd by finding defects in the Premises or the Consequence. You might have seen (to use your own words) better Logick read to the D. of P. in my Pag. 10 and 11. Where tis thewn you, that if the Premifes be right, and the Inference good, the Conclusion must be as necessarily True, as that the same Thing cannot be, and not be at once: Yet, you take no notice of it, but still run on obstinately to confute all the Schools and University ties that ever Writ or Taught Logick from the beginning of the World, to the Time of His and Your Writing. The Truth is, you are fick of the Argument, and would thift it off on any Fathion. Bring what Instances you please; But first you are to Answer our Argument, and next, to fee the Authority that qualifies your Instance for an Argument, be above Morally Certain: otherwise it will be beyond the power of any Logick to make it conclude: For the force of that Maxim on which the Conclusiveness of any Argument is built, is far beyond any Moral Certainty; Nor let Dr. St. think

Thid.

to stand arguing still ad hominem; but let him be sure his Instance infers the Truth of his Conclusion, when it comes to be put to the Test of a Syllogism. This we will expect from him; since it is the Right of the Respondent to deny any thing that is not driven up to Evidence; and by that Test we will judge of your Instance and other Arguments, if you have any that you will youch to be Demonstrative, that is, Conclusive.

51. You feem to kind as not to undertake to prove that an erring Church adheres to Tradition, if it be True Apostolical Tradition, and that it adheres to it wholly and folely. I a little wonder at this; for if you mean not by Tradition such a one as is built on Living voice and Practice, you ran quite away from the Point; If fuch a one; you quit your own Rule, by requiring men should adhere to the other wholly and Solely, and admit that a Church adhering to fuch a Tradition is not an Erring Church. I inferr: Therefore, till you anfwer our Argument which proves that our Tradition could not be interrupted by any Innovation, you cannot with reason deny but ours is such. You think Infallibility a kind of barr against our murual Agreement as if there were any hopes or even possibility men's Minds fliould center, unless it be in something that is Absolutely Certain or Evident. Shew us something elfe endered with fuch an Evidence as is able to oblige Human Nature to an Universal Acceptation and Conviction, and then blame us for maintaining Infallibility. Prillthen pray, excuse us for making such Provision for Faith, as fets it beyond Possibility of Falsehood. You drop fome infignificant Exceptions after the Shower of your shrewd (invisible) Reasons. that our * Argument must prove that no man that hath been taught the Faith can ever err from it; and yet still withall

withall, confess that a Church, following Tradition wort, may leave it afterwards. This were an Incoherence with a witness: But how do you shew our Argument must prove this abfurd position! Onely with saying it here over and over again, without the least attempt to flew from our words or Doctrine, this pretended neceffity, that we must both contradict our selves so grossely, and belides go against our daily experience. I do affure the Reader we have no where either fuch words or fense, and that 'tis meerly a false sham or some weak deduction of yours, for want of some better thing to fay. Our Tener is that, tho not one fingle man can erre while he adheres to our Rule, yet even some particular Churches may leave off adhering to Tradition, and fo err in Faith. Onely we fay that the main Body of the Church confifting of all particular Churches that compound Christianity, being supported by Motives of adhering to the former Faith, for Prevalent, and Universal, and apply & to a very vast multitude of them, cannot conspire to relinquish this Rule, go against and diffrace their own Testimony, nor confequently err in Faith. The word [44] indeed, and [They] in each Propolition are distributive, and appliable to each fingle man; but do you find the leaft word in any of them, that fayes that fingle men or great multitudes may not out of malice alter Faith? Where find you that ! Or that they cannot defert the Ruley and by Confequence their Faith. Pray, be not fo liberal of our Concessions, without shewing something under our hands for it. 9000

52. But you furn up your Solution of our Demonfiration with an admirable grace, or rather you give us the very Quinteffence of your Answer to it in thele few words. The Church of Rome, fays all base broke the Rule of Tradition but she onely, and proves it, by saying that she holds the same to day she did yesterday, and so up to our B. Saviours time. You proceed. We call again for a Proof of this. She tells us, If The follow'd this, Rule she could never err in Faith. But did she follow this Rule? She says she did; and if you will not believe her, there's an end. How smart and victorious this looks? But the best is, 'ris wholly built on some few of your own wilfull Falsifications. Pray, where did we ever bring these Words, [If the followed this Rule, &c.] For a Proof that the holds the fame to day which the did yeflerday. Or where did we prove we follow'd this Rule only with iffs ? But why are you so shy to quote the Pages or Paragraphs where we bring these abfurd Proofs? because you would be at Liberty to fay any thing and yet not expose your Credit. And 'tis worth noting, that you point out the Page in other occasions very diligently; but, when you have a mind to falfify, tis still supprest. Tis observable too that this infincerity of yours here is of fuch advantage to you, that it gains the whole Cause. For, if we prove this main Point no better but with Iffs, & that our Argument has no force but by standing to your Kindness in Believing what Our Church fays, then there's an End indeed; for nothing can be more Evident, than, 'tisthat in that Supposition. we are utterly routed, & our whole Cause quite deseated. Now I would entreat the Reader (for You are refolv'd neither to use your Eyes nor Honesty, lest they should too openly accuse you) that he will once more review our Argument, as tis put down by Dr. St. himfelf, First Letter, p. 4. and 5. and made good by me, p. 8. and 9. and he will see clearly, the first half of it was to prove, that If they follow'd this Rule, viz. of believing the same to day they did yesterday, they could never err in Faith, or were

were Infallible: And the other part [And they could not innovate in Faith, unless they did forget what they beld the day before, or out of malice alter it] was brought to prove they did ever follow that Rule. For fince nothing but Innovation can break the Chain of Tradition, whoever proves they could not innovate, proves directly they could not recede from Tradition. Nay, twas confest by Dr. St. himself, when he was as yet in better circumstances, (First Letter, p. 5. 1. 4.) that we prov'd our Church could not innovate, by the Medium now mention'd. Yet you have the Confidence to tell the Reader, she only laps she follows this Rule; and if you will not believe her, there's an end: Whereas you ought in candour to have faid, They prov'd the follow'd, and could not but follow this Rule; but I cannot answer their Argument, and there's an End. See what you have brought upon your felf, and how fatal it is to your pretended Answer, that as you began your Reply to this 4th. Proposition with a most wicked Falsisication, fo you close it up here with a double one, and those too of so large a fize, that were they True, they had carry'd all before them. Your intermediate Endeavours are many of them of the same kind; the rest Mistakes, (and generally wilful ones) which I thought at first to have reckon'd up; but they thicken'd to upon me, that I faw it would be tedious to count them, and so gave it over. But your excuse for this infincere Carriage is, That you do no more than all Writersuse to do, who have had the bad luck to defend an ill Cause, and come to be prest withClose Truth. All they can do, when they are not able to give a good acount of themselves, is, to bend all their study and feek about for shifts, how they may give no account. And the D. of P. and you are of this prudent Generation. I fay once again, 'Tis your Chief Study how to shift; and long Study of any thing, with frequent practice, makes a man Excellent at it; & every man loves most to do that he

P. 27.

*See above. Sect. 39. is Excellent at; and fo we are to expect it. To convince the Reader whether I wrong you or no, Put you your Arguments for the Absolute Certainty of your Rule in conveying to us Christ's Senle, and for your following it, as close and home as you can possibly; and see whether I do not answer it directly, fairly & squarely, without any of these shifting Excursions or Falsincations: And let our different Carriage be the Test to distinguish the candid Asserters of Truth, from the Insurere Abetters of Errour.

53. After I had shew'd that Scripture privately interpreted could not be a Rule of Faith, the nature, and method of our Dispute led me into an Enquiry what was in reality your Rule, as you are fuch a kind of Protestant; and, to this End I discours't thus; That Scripture was a Generical Rule, common to you and all Herefies in the world; and, That your Specifical Rule must be [as my felf and those of my Judgment understand or interpret it. I And can there be any thing more Evident? Do not they all frive to lay claim to the Letter of Scripture for their Rule, as well as you? Do not they all, as much as you, rely upon it, and avail themselves by quoting it still, and endeavouring to shew it favourable to their respective Tenets? Plain Experience informs us and every one, they all do this, and that too, with an ardour and earnestness equal to yours, as far as we can discern. In this then you all agree; and therefore tis beyond all dispute, Scripture is your Common or Generical Rule, if we may believe your Carriage and Profession. Now let's see what 'tis you disagree in. And 'tis manifest you disagree in the Sense of Scripture; otherwise, the Sense of Scripture being God's Sense or your Faith, you would be of the same Faith; which cannot be pretended, fince you contradict them, and they You, in matters belonging to Faith; and What's the Way to arrive at the Sense of Scripture? Certainly the Interpreting it; for Interpretation signifies in proper fpeech.

speech the Giving or Assigning to Words their sense; and do not you accept that Sense of Scripture for your Faith which your Private Judgment interpreting it, conceives to Be truly its meaning; and they, in like manner, as they apprehend it, ought to be interpreted ? Is it not for this very end you facry up your Judgment of Discretion, and that you are not to submit to the Decrees of Councils or Confest of Fathers, farther than you conceive them agreeable to the Word of God? Does not Dr. St. profess openly, that his fober Enquirer may understand the Explicit Sense of Implicit Points that are Doubtful (fuch as all main Points of Faith are) without the Church's belp, (Second Letter, p. 21.) that is, without any Publick Interpreter? And, Will you after this deny that Scripture is your General Rule in which you agree with all Hereticks; and your specifical, peculiar or proper Rule, in which you differ from them, and they from one another, is Scripture, as Interpreted by your felves? The thing is plain, let's fee what you fay to it. You with a very dexterous artifice, grant and not grant it, as we shall see anon: and tell us, 1. That Scripture is and ought to be common to all Hereticks, tho' they miserably abuse it. Pray, Sir, use my words; I faid, a Common Rute to them and you; and, Can that be truly a Rule, which they direct themselves by and yet warp into Errour? Tou tell us indeed they miferably abuse it; and the Socinians will say the same of you, while you pretend to prove thence Christ is God. And how shall this Quarrel be decided? For tis hitherto a drawn Match between you, while you fight with that ambidextrous Weapon, Scripture's Letter interpretable by Private Judgments. The Point still sticks: How can an indifferent man, feeking for Faith by your Rule, be fatiffy'd They abuse it more than Tou? Must not you be oblig'd to shew him some clearer Light than They have, and that this Light justifies you for judging thus harshly of them, that they are such miserable Abusers of Scripture? And

And, if you do not, must he not in true reason judge 'tis. pretended by you gratis; as also, that you're highly uncharitable, to charge them downright with fo hainous a Crime? Tis that farther degree of Light in You that must justifie you for these pretences, which we would gladly fee: for, whatever it is, 'tis That which diftinguishes you. from them, and fets you up to be Right Ufers of Scripture: that is, it gives you the Right Sense of it, or your Faith: and fo it must difference you Essentially from them in your Grounds or Rule. 'Tis this Light, I fay, we would beat; Why is it so shy to shew its Face? 2. Tho tis hard to conceive how they can be faid to abuse Scripture who follow it to their Power; yet, fince you will have it allow'd you gratis, Does not their pretended miserable Abuse of Scripture confist in misinterpreting it? Certainly, you must say it does. And if so, then your right Interpretation of it, or your taking it in a right fense, is that in which your right Use of it consists: wherefore your own Interpretation of it, is, beyond all Evasion, that which differences you from them; and so 'tis your peculiar or specifical Rule of Faith. 3. Do those Hereticks who thus miserably abuse it, do this out of Wilfulness, that is, do they indeed understand it right, but pretend they do not; or do they use their endeavour to understand it and yet hap to abuse it by misunderstanding it? If the former, then again you must tell us gratis, and ought to make it out to an Indifferent man feeking for Faith, that the Socinians (and all the erring Sects) are the most wickedly infincere, and the most blasphemous men in the World, nay, the greatest Hypocrites to boot; to know certainly by Scripture that Christ-is God, and yet knowingly impugn his Divinity, voluntarily abuse Scripture they feem to highly to venerate, and pretend Conscience all the while: And yet none but you have such horrid apprehensions of them: and as for my felf, seeing how they

they decline no Adversary at the alledging and comparing Places, how feduloufly they make Scripture their Study, and in all appearance adhere to the Letter : I verily believe they follow it to their power, but fall into Errour through their misfortune of espousing a wrong Rule. And if you still fay they are thus voluntarily infincere, I defire to know of you by what outward figns can an indifferent man judge Tow and your Party are not as Infincere as They, or perhaps more? Acquaint us, I fay, for what other Reason you fay this, but because they frame another Sense of Scripture than you do, that is interpret it differently from You? If you can give no other than your own Interpretation is the only Light you have to judge them Hereticks or to determine what's Herefie; and by confequence to judge what's True Faith; and so 'tis unavoidably your Rule of Faith, of which more by and by. But, if you fay they follow it to their power, and yet err in Faith, then the fault not being in Them, for not following their Rule, their fault must be (as it is yours) their adhering to a Rule which fecures not men, tho' doing their best to understand it, from falling into Herefie; that is, it confifts in their pitche ing upon that for their Rule, which is indeed no Rule at all.

54. Your Rule then equally patronizing true Faith and Herefie, I had reason to affirm, that it inferr'd those blasphemous Propositions, as to make Light and Darkness very confistent, and Christ and Belial very good Friends. Now, this being my Charge, it was manifestly your Duty to shew it does not patronize true Faith and Heresie, and by doing so, induce those horrid blasphemies; and to make out, that only true Faith can be grounded on Scripture privately interpreted; and therefore, that I had impeach'd it wrongfully. But this was too hard a Point to meddle with. Instead of doing this, and clearing your self from Blasphemy, which

was directly incombine on you, you tell the Reader, with a great garb of Gravity, that I speak Blasphony my felf, Blafphemy against God and his Holy Ward when I only mention it while I am charging you with it. And hereupon, like a right Good man, you fall to talk Godly, and out of your pure Charity will needs beflow upon me the Benediction of your hearty Prayer that God would give me Repentance unto Life. Indeed had I faid that Christ and Belial could ever be reconch'd, or advanc'd any Position that imply'd it, as yours does, I confess, I must have been Guilty of a horrid Blafphemy, But, not knowing how to clear your felf. for owning no Rule but firch a one as equally patronia zes Truth and Falshood, and therefore, by a necessary confequence, infers those Blasphemics; you very demurely put on a Godly Countenance, and betake your felf very charitably to your hearty Prayers. As much as to fay, In good Truth, Sir, I cannot answer you, nor thew I have any Rule, but what ferves for Errour as well as Truth; but yet if that may excuse me, I will be content in lieu of it, to pray for you with all my Heart. Is not this pleafant?

and all Hereticks. What's your particular Rule? Here r. You take it ill that we will needs know what's your Rule better than your felves do; And we take it as ill of You, that you would have us believe you before our own Evident Reason. We know you cannot defend such an insignificant Rule as your own Interpretations; and therefore are forc'd to disjoun it, when we press you to give a good account of it; with which may very well consist, that you proceed upon it when the danger is remote. 2. You assure us Plain Scripture is your Rule; that is, (as appears by your Discourse here) your Rule as you are such a kind of Protestant. Pray, will you

Thid.

P. 28.

explain and unreddle to us this molt conferme word Plain I in what kind of Points, to whom, and by what kind of Light is Serpture taken as your Rule Poliny And ters have forherhing more than a blind Word to work on. Experience tells us Scripture is not plain, even in the highest Points of Faith, since so many follow it, and yet go astray. Again, if it be so plain, all your ufeful Helps are needless; and Lastly, Scripture conceived by you to be plain, which is your particular Rule, can never be made out to be Abfolutely Certain; for the Socinians too proceed upon Scripture, Plain to them, as their Rule, and vet err which evinces tis not fo plain as to convince and certainly (enlighten Human Reason attending to it : An evident Argument, that both the one and the other do but fancy it plain, but that, in reality, 'tis Plain to neither. 3. You declare, that the Interpretatrinheal to it, and no constitutive difference of it. That the Interpretation of Romanifes is not the particular Rule of Four Protestants, all the World knew before; which makes it frivolous to tell us fo here. Nor do we challenge you, or pretend, that the Interpretation of any other Sell is your Rule; for we told you, that the Interpretation of each Sect, respectively, was its particular Rule. Tis Pour own Interpretation we faid was your Rule: instead of granting or denying which, you shuffle about, and talk of the Interpretation of Romanifes, and other Sects. But, if (which is strangely exprest) in other Sects you include your own too, 'tis all one to my Discourse. For, whether you regard the Interpretation of your own Sect, or make account, that as each individual Angel is. a distinct Species, so each individual Interpreter among you is a distinct Sect, still Scripture, as interpretable by your selves, is your particular Rule, and not Extrinsical to it. For let me ask you once more, Is not the Sense

P. 28.

of Scripture your Faith: and Is not that Effectally your Rarticular Rule of Faith that gives you your Particular Faith? and Must I mind you again, that it is the very Essence (as I may say) or nature of Interpretation to give you the Sense of the Words of Scripture. which in our case is your Faith, Wringle then still which way you please, you can never avoid, but your own Interpretation of Scripture is your Particular Rule: taking you either for a whole Sectian Individual or Both. 66. At length, as a man in danger when he is fol-

low'd close at the Heels, and ready to be caught, takes a desperate leap, the he hazards himself a mischief, you venture boldly to declare what is your particular Rule, as differenced from both Romanists, and other Hereticks P. 28. and Sectaries : Viz. Scripture plainly delivering a Sense own'd and declar'd by the Primitive Church of Christ in the Three Creeds, Four First General Councils, and Harmany of the Fathers. After which you add, This, I hope. is plain dealing; and no wriggling; and here we take up our fland, let him endeavour to draw us whither he can. Never fear it, Sir, you are out of danger of being drawn any whither. Ten thousand Cart-Ropes will not go round you and we must be at least Twenty Years in fastening them. But let's examin this your particular Rule. r. I ask, whether, fince Differences use to be Essential, these words, [own'd and declar'd by the Primitive Church, &c.] which are found in the Difference of your Rule from that of others, be at all Effential, or not : If not Effential, fince, if you be Orthodox, you ought to have a Rule effentially distinct from that of Hereticks and Sectaries, what is this Effentially-different Rule of yours; for 'tis this we are enquiring after? If you fay 'tis Effential; then Scripture had not all the due power to regulate you as to your faith, without their additional Light: And, by confequence, Scripture

is not your Only and Intire Rule, as you ever pretended hitherto: fince these are Part of it. 2 When you say vour Rule is Scripture, plainly delivering a Sense, &c. I suppose you must mean such a particular Sense as is of Faith with you: and can any more be requir'd to your particular Rule than Scripture plainly delivering your particular Faith ? Certainly you will not fay it. For, there is the Divine Authority in the Scripture, which is the Formal Motive of Divine Faith. There is Plainness. which gives it a Directive Vertue, and qualifies it for a Rule; and the Clear Light of this plain Rule must shine bright upon the particular Tenets you hold, for 'tis to faine there, and no where elfe. Which once put, what can all the other, effeem'd by you but Human Authorities, serve for ? Can they add weight to the Divine Authority, or clear that to us which is already fo plain by Scripture? 3. Pray be candid, and tell us, After a thing is plain in Scripture, are you to value a straw, what either Primitive Church, Creeds, or Fathers fay? I dare fay you will grant you are not. Wherefore, all these are utterlyuseless, unless they be pretended to give you some light to interpret Scripture. But this cannot be neither; both because you tell us here plain Scripture is your Rule, and it would not be plain, but obscure, if it needed an Explainer : Besides, you put this as a constitutive difference of your Rule, and yet deny'd that any Interpretation of Scripture is fuch, but Extrinsical to it. 'Tis then a great Mystery still; how these Human Authorities affect your General Rule, or influence your Faith already had by plain Scripture, or to what end they serve but for a Show only. 4. The Lutherans proceed upon all these as much as you, and yet hold a Reall Presence of Christ's very Body in the Sacrament, as much as we do. So that this does not difference you in your Grounds or Rule from all

other Sects; for fure you will nordeny that to be a Sect. that holds an Errour, which Dr. St. has taken such pains to prove is Idolatry. My last question shall be, Whether your fober Enquirers are not to come to their particular Faith, by this their particular Rule of Faith? And; fince its Evident they must, we would know next how many of them are to arrive at any Faith at all? For it will take up many Years to examin and compare all the Fathers, and be fure of their Harmony with one another, and with the Scripture too. Nay, the Duration of the World will be too short to compass that Satisfaction, if we may believe the * Bishop of Downs, who assures us, That out of the Fathers succeeding the Primitive Times, both fides eternally and inconfutably shall bring Sayings for themselves respectively, Can any man living make Sense of such stuff, or ever come at his Faith by fuch a Rule?

* Diffusiive from Popery, P 7.

P. 29.

one Protestant in a million follow'd Dr. St's Rule, but honeftly follow'd the Tradition of their own Church. Pastours or Fathers; that is, believ'd as they had been educated. To the first part of this Assertion you fav little, but that if there be any Fault, 'tis the Fault of the People only. But if this peculiar Rule of yours, which takes in the feeing your Senfe of Scripture own'd and declar'd by the Primitive Church, Four first General Councils, and the Harmony of the Fathers, be to be followed e're you can come at your Faith; I doubt the Fault will prove to be in the Rule. For very few Perfons have Learning, fewer Leifure enough, and none of them fecurity, of having any Faith by this Method; unless you could ensure their Salvation by inspiring those who are ignorant with competent Learning to understand all the Fathers and their Harmony; and withal, by letting them good long Leafes of their Lives; which I

57. For this last Reason chiefly, I affirm'd, That not

am of opinion you cannot. The fecond part, that they follow'd the Method of Tradition, puts you in a marvelvellous jocund humour; and, as if you had forgot your way (a thing not unufual with you) you ask, all amaz'd, Where are we now ? In the Church of Rome e're we are aware of it: We are all good Roman-Catholicks on a fudden, we are become an Infallible Church, &c. and away you run with the Jest, laughing and giggling as if you had found a Mare's Neft. Surcease your fears, good Sir, you are not a jot the nearer being Catholicks for following your own Tradition. It reaches no farther than John Calvin, Martin Luther, or some such Reforming Heroe; and there it ends and stops in a flat Novelty. Whereas Catholicks abhor a Tradition that has any known Beginning, or takes a Name from any Particular Author, or has any Original but Christ, his Apostles, and the Church in the very first Age, who were the Original Deliverers of it to the next, and so to the succeeding ones. Pray Sir, what's become of your Jest? All I faid, was, that You * followed the Way of Tradition, * First Letter, however milplac'd; I prov'd it by Reasons and Instances; p. 27-13, 4. you hint some, omit others, and pervert the rest. You tell us, 'tis all Scriptural Tradition. But we will trust our Eyes and Experience before your bare Word. We fee some taught before they can read; we see them Catechiz'd in Churches, and they repeat and believe what's there told them, tho' Scripture be not quoted for the diftinct Passages. We see them read the Scripture afterwards: but we fee withal not One in Thousands trusts his own Judgment of Discretion for the sense of it : but, without reluctancy or jealousie, accepts that which his Pastours assign to it; especially in Spiritual Points, or Mysteries of Faith, about which we are chiesly discourfing. But do not your felf incline to admit (as much as we can expect from a man that affects not too much

candour) that very thing you so laugh at here. I affirm'd, that Not one in a million thinks of relying on your Rule of Faith, in order to make choice of their Faith, &c. This you answer with hems and habs: Tho' I fear—yet I hope he is out in his Account—I am apt to think they are more attentive—Tet he it as he would have it, &c. Now, since they must either have their Faith by Reliance on their Pastours and Preachers, delivering it to them, and educating them in it, that is, by some kind of Tradition; or else by relying on Scripture; * and your self seems to doubt, or rather in a manner grants it, That they have it not the later way; you must at least doubt that they have it by the Way of Tradition. But your Fancy was so big with your empty Jest, that you had forgot what you had allow'd but a little before.

P. 29.

* Ibid.

ftep; not (as is your constant use) pickt out a few words fcatter'd here and there: which you thought you might most commodiously pervert: wherefore I have reason to expect the same exact measure from you. The Sum of your Answer is manifestly this. Shuffles and within Mistakes without number; Evasions endless; Fallistications frequent; Godly Talk frivolous; Jests groundless; and all these brought in still to stop Gaps when your Reason was Nonplust. Be pleas'd to leave off your Affected Insincerities; otherwise I must be forc't to Expose them yet farther; than which there can be no Task more Ungrateful imposed upon

your Bervant,

ERRATA. Page 3.1. 28. Read both of u. p. 10. l. ult. find it in. p. 11. l. 11. notice there, p. 21. l. 24. go forwards. p. 22. l. 27. Secret. again, p. 23. l. 9. ss I had not. p. 32. l. 30. Is it a Way, blok l. 32. upon it it p. 39. l. 7. Town Resson u, because. p. 44. l. 17 may hap, p. 45. l. 5. Gift, blid l. 32. Prince of p. 46. l. 7. it. Whether. p. 48. l. 27. a most. p. 53. l. 12. Adherers. p. 57. l. 14. to be at a loss. blid. l. ult. discovered it. p. 60. l. 8. Speculaters. p. 62. l. 9. Tox. not. sq. capticitly or. p. 63. l. 28. formally and. p. 73. l. 13. other, then.

THE THIRD

Catholick Letter

IN

ANSVVER

To the Arguing Part of

Poctoz Stillingsleet's

SECOND

LETTER

To Mr. G.

By f. S. ergeant

Published with Allowance.

LONDON.

Printed, and sold by Matthew Turner at the Lamb in High-Holbourn. 1 6 8 7.

1946

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ANSVVER

To the Arguing Part of

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SECOND

To Mr. G.

By 4. S.

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Prince, and fold by Mitchen Times at the Lund in

Quellion you tell us (p.p.) you

SIR,

Come now to take a view of your Second Letter, with my Eye, as in the former, fixt only upon what I think you mean for Argument. Whether you give us just your First Words at the Conference, or fecond Thoughts fince; whether no troublesome Part of Mr. G's Discourse be left out; in short, whatever belongs to matter of Fact, shall be out of my prospect, which shall be bounded by what you think fit to open to it.

You acquaint us here (Pag. 7.) that you put noo Que-Stions. 1. How does it appear that the Church of Rome is Infallible in the fense and meaning of Tradition . 2. Is this Tradition a Rule of Faith distinct from Scripture? And you complain of Mr. G. that his Copy makes you ask a very wife Question. viz. How does it appear that the Church of Rome is Infallible in Tradition. Why this Question should be ironically call'd a very wife one, I cannot imagin. I am fure it is very pertinent to the Intention of your Dispute, and directly points at one of the Chief Subjects of the Conference. But you shall have your Will; tho I beleive it will appear Mr. 6's question made better Provision for your Credit in point of Wifomnie cun

dom than you have done for your felf.

2. For, your Second was in truth a very needless Question: because both your felf and all your Auditours, if they ever heard any thing of this kind of Controversy, knew beforehand without needing to ask. that the Tradition we lay claim to, pretends to derive down the Intire Body of Christ's Doctrin, and not only the Books of Scripture, of which (P. 9.) you very learnedly feem to counterfeit your felf ignorant. And this is the first part of your distinguishing the plain Sense of this Word [Tradition] as held by Mr. G. By this Question you tell us (p.9.) you intended to put a difference between the Tradition held by us [Provestants] and the Tradition disputed. For the first meaning of the Word [Tradition] which you grant, you put the Uniniverfal Testimony of the Christian Church; as to the Books of Scripture. The second and deny'd meaning you contradiffinguish from the former in these words. But if by Tradition be understood either some necessary Acticles of Faith not contain'd in Scripture, or a Power in the Church to make unnecessary to become necessary, this I deny'd, &c. Certainly, Sir, you have a Logick of your own fo peculiarly fitted to your delignes, that no man Living but your felf ever us dit. I ever thought, and apprehended I had all the World on my fide for thinking fo, that all Differences or Distinctions were to he Opposites, and to divide the Common Genus, or the Notion that was to bediftinguisht; and, therefore, fince the first sense of the Word [Tradition] was Tradition for Books of Scripture, which is your Tenet: I verily expected the opposit sense of it should have been Tradition for Doctrines, which is Ours; and that, as the former was Tradition for Christ's Words, so the latter should be Tradition for Christ's Sense. But while I was vainly imagining

dition for Faith, inflead of that I found nothing but fuch Articles, and Such a Power. Did ever any mortal Man think or pretend that Tradition was an Article, or a Power, any more than that it was a Horfe shoe A Did your felf when, you granted the Latin and Greek Churches fol- Dr. 50's First low'd Tradition, intend to fignify that they follow'd Letter. P. 5. Articles and Powers & The fumm then of your learned Distinction is in plain Tormsthis: Tradition is two-fold : One is a Tradition for Books the other is no Eradition at all, but only articles and Power. Had it not been better then to have accepted of Mr. G's Civility, and have answerd to the purpose, rather than out of a pique to his Copy, and a defire to make it fland in need to be corrected, thus to pervert common fense, and out of a too zealous care not to forfeit your Wisdome, to commit fuch an illogical Abfurdity? But Sense and Logick, tho they, be plain and honest true Friends, wet I must own that, like the Queens Old Courtiers, they may appear scandalous Companions to a man of your more polite and modish Education. However, L dare answer for you, it was not ignorance of their worth, but an unlucky necessity, which made you introduce in their room two New Questions to while away the time and escape the true one, which you had no mind to meet close and grapple with. Yet perhaps you may have better luck in your First Question; let us see : By your First Question then, and your Explication of your Defign of it immediately after, 'tis easy to discern that you again quite miltake the End and Ule, and confequently the Nature of Tradition; which is a very inaufpicious beginning, and puts us out of hopes you should ever discourse pertinently of it, fince you go about to impugn you know not what. For Tradition does not bring

P. 70

us down fet Forms of Words onely, as you imagin viz (as you instance P. y.) Christ was the Son of God. under which you fay well a Hererical Senfe may by: But it derives down to us the very fense of those words, and all the reft of Christ's Doctrine; there being found in Tradition all the ways and means to fignify and express the Determinate Meaning and Senfe of Forefathers that can possibly be imagin'd! For they not only deliver the Propolitions of Faith in fuch or fo many Words, as you apprehend; but, they fignify to their Children the very Teners they have in their hearts, in such expreffions as best futes with the occasion, according as their different methods of explaining themselves may lead them. You may upon reflexion observe it passes thus in your felf when you instruct people in their Faith: In which circumstance, you do not ty your felf up to rigorous Forms of Words made to your hands, but take your liberty to deliver your felf in any manner that you judge will make your meaning be best understood. The same Method is taken by the Pastours of the Church (and the Fathers of Families too according to their pitch and station.) They Catechize their Children; they Preach upon the Texts proper to fuch Points; they dilate themselves in their Discourse, with a full defign to make their Sense be perfectly comprehended: they reply to the difficulties of those who are not yet perfectly inftructed, or well fatisfied; and accommodate themselves to all their Exigencies. Lastly, they lead their Christian Lives, and breed up others to do the same. by those Principles: And, Experience as well as Reafon tells us, that nothing gives the determinate fenfe of Words which express Teners, more distinctly than does perpetual Practice, and Living conformably to what's fignified by those Words. The want of which Requisits Requisits in the Letter of Scripture, which can give no Answer to any difficulty, nor vary any expression to make its Meaning more Intelligible, nor live, and by Example make the Reader live according to such a sense, shews clearly, that, taking it alone and unaffished by the Churche's Tradition (determining and ascertaining it's meaning in Dogmatical Points) it cannot in any proper

Speech be call'd a Rule of Faith.

2. If, notwithstanding what has been said, this Difcourse should still seem to you more a Speculation than a Real Truth (which yet I judge impossible): pray refact how your felf would go about to inftruct your own Children in your Faith; and you will eafily find by experience, when itis brought home to your own cafe, how connectural this Way is to clear to them your fense, in what you would have them Believe. Do not your felf use the same Methodo Doyon only deliver to them certain Forms of Speech, without endeavouring, by all the possible means you can invent, to imprint the true fense (that I may use your own Instance) of these Words [Christ is the Son of GOD] in their Soulsy and to make it full clearer to them, as their budding capacities grow riper and riper & Do you not experience they come by degrees to understand you too; land that you have at length transfus'd into them the Sense of the Tenet you had in your own Breast ? Do not you practically infil into them, that they might to Pray to Christ; and exercife their Faith, Hope and Charity towards Him while they are Praying? Do not you tell them they are to give Divine Reverence to Christ; without stinting them, or making them scruple, left they give too much, or commit Idolarry, by giving that to a Creature, which is only due to the True GOD? And does not this Practife, beyond all poffibility of miftake, infinuate into them, that

the is equally to be Ador which God the Fattler, of Cooqual to him; and, fo, not a Cremure, but very God of very God. I doubt not but you do all this; at least, I am fure if you do it not you do not your Duty : Nor do I doubt but vine Children come at length to under fland y ou too, and by understanding you, become of the fame Religion. And can you imagine, that Men were not Men irrall Ages, but (in the blind times of Popery for footh!) degenerated into Parrots and learn'd to prate fet-Words, without minding their Senfe? Or, that Christians were not alwayes Christians, and endeavour'd to imbue under-growing Posterity with the Meaning of the Teners they profest and hop't to be Sav'd by their propagating them to those whom they were bound to fee Instructed in Faith? Or. laftly, can you conceive there can be any Means invenred by Man's Wit to make known and propagate the Sense of Words that express Points of Faith, which is not in the highest measure found in Tradition? If you cannot, (as I am fure you cannot) then you must withal either confess, that Tradition brings down the Sense of Christ's Laws and nor the bare Words or Sounds only or, you multadvance this monftrous Paradox, that there is no possible way in the whole World for Mankind to communicate their Thoughts and Meanings to one another in fuch Points; the contrary to which you experience dayly in your felf and others. And, were this fo. then, to what end were Catechifms, Sermons and Controversies about such subjects To what end all Instructions, Conferences, and Explications of them by the Paflours? Again, if you grant these (as you must) to be the best Expedients to transmit down the Sense of Christ's Words, that is our Faith; how can you hold Scripture's Letter the Rule of Faith: which, taken as counterdiffin guish't to Tradition, wants all those most effectual Means

of discovering to us it's Meaning. Certainly, That must be the Rule of Faith that is belt qualify'd to give us our Faith; and that must be best qualify'd to give us our Faith, which has the best Means to give us Christ's Sense; and not that which wants all the best Means to produce such an Effect. On the other side, supposing Christ's Doctrine once settled in the Body of the Church, how can you deny Tradition, thus abundantly furnisht with the best Means imaginable to deliver down the firsttaught Doctrine, to be fuch a Bule; feeing no more is requir'd to be a Rule of Faith, but to be qualify'd with a Power to acquaint us who live at this distance with the true Sense of what was deliver'd by the Founders of the Church in the beginning, without danger of losing it by the way; which cannot be imagin'd as long as Tradition is held to, the same believ'd to day which was held yesterday, or that the immediately succeeding Fathers still deliver'd the same Doctrin. To do which there wanted no Power, as has been lately shewn to the full; nor Will to use that Power; being oblig'd to it by the greatest Penalties GOD himself could inflict, the Damning Themselves and their Posterity.

4. But, fay you (pag. 8.) If the Church may explain the Sense and Meaning of Tradition, so as to oblige men to believe that by Virtue of such Explication, which they were not oblig'd to before, then'tis impossible the Infallibility of Tradition should by in a constant Tradition from Father to Son; for they have no Power to oblige to any more than they received.] How Plausibly and smoothly this Discourse runs, and how shrewdly it seems to conclude? Would any well-meaning Reader imagin that it were perfect Non-sense all the while, and wholly built only your own Liberality, giving us another fort of Tradition which is no Tradition? This malignant word [Tradition]

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dition I must not be taken in its right fense, that's refolvid for then it would grow too troublefom; but, take it in any other fense, that is, mistake it, and then have at it. For when you fpeak of explaining the fense and meaning of Iradition, you do not take Tradition, as, you know well, we do, and as the word plainly imports: for the Delivery of Doctrin, but for Doctrins Delivered : and foragain, we have once more loft the Question. For, what can these words mean? If the Church may explain the sense and meaning of Tradition; that is, of the Method of conveying down Christs Doctrin? The Method of Delivery is the very Signification of that Doctrin from Age to Age, and how can one Explain the Sente and meaning of a fignification of Christ's fenfe, when it's felf is that very Explication of it? This gives me occasion to reflect how oddly you have hamper'd our Tradition hitherto inflead of handling it. P. o. You feem to doubt by your [If no more were meant. &c.] Whether it does not mean Tradition for the Books of Scripture; and, this you knew well enough before. was none of our Tradition in dispute here; which, as may be feen by Mr. G's Demonstration put down by your felf, First Letter p. 4. and 5. is confest to be Tradition for matters of Faith or Doctrin: Now in this new fense you give us there of Tradition, you kindly *grant it; for tis your own, not that which we here mean by that word. Next comes *another [If] and makes it feem to fignify Articles and Power. And this is no Tradition at all neither ours, nor yours, nor any body's: For, neither those Articles nor that Power you speak of p. 10. are or can be the Delivery of Christ's Doctrin from day to day; for that speaks such a Method of bringing down things, not the things brought down. And this you very gravely deny And lo you may, with my good leave, either deny or expunge, or condemn it to what doom

* P. 9.

* Thid.

* P. 10.

doom you please; for certainly it comes with a felonious Intention, to draw the Reader out of his Road into a Labyrinth of Non-fense, and then robb him of his Reason. Again, p. 7. you make it a Delivery of bare Words, at best, with a general (impossible) fense, and perhaps a Heretical one too, into the bargain: whereas you cannot but know Tradition, as We mean it, is a Delivery of the fense of Christian Tenets, and this a particular lenfe too; and fuch a one as cannot possibly be Heretical, while this Rule is adher'd to; unless the First-Taught Faith were Heretical, which is Blasphemy to imagin. And, here again p. 8. you make Tradition or Delivery to mean the Point delivered, and would have us give you the fignification and Explication of That which is it's felf the fignification and Explication of Christ's Faith; and this too, the *very best that can be imagin'd. Is it possible to deform Tradition more un- *See Sed. 2, & towardly, or wreft it into more misconstructions than has 3. been done already? After a ferious manner, certainly, 'tis impossible: But Drollery is now to act its part: And to cheer your spirits, which droop't under the difficulty of answering the Argument for Tradition, you put your felf in mafquerade; and would make the Relation of perhaps two or three, it may be, partial Friends of yours, concerning Mr. 6's Difcourse about You, a perfect parallel to our Rule of Faith; and that, if they can mistake or misrepresent, down goes Tradition. Which amounts to this, that fooner may all the Christian Fathers in any Age, confifting of many millions, and those disperst in far-distant Parts of the World, be mistaken in their Faith, which it imported them no less than their Salvation to know: fooner may all of them conspire to deliver to their Children another Doctrin than that which they held the way to Heaven; than that a very

few of your own Party should, to gratify you, tell you a false Story, or Aggravate; tho' all of them were, befides, profest Adverfaries to the Person against whom they witnest; and, indeed, Witnesses in their Own Common Caufe. I beseech you, Sir, tho' you be never so much to feek for a folid Answer, yet speak at least plaufible things, and do not thus expose your Credit while you affect to play the Wit. Poor Tradition, what has it done to be thus misrepresented! Did it deserve no better for bringing down the Book of Scripture, but to be exposed in fo many aukward Vizards, when it was to come upon the Stage, and not once fuffer'd to flew it's true face, but still travestee'd into another Form, and put in all shapes but its own? This Carriage of yours is enough to make the Reader think you apprehend it to be fome terrible Gorgons Head, or fome Bafilisk; and, that the very fight of it, unless it came thus muffled up, would undo you. At least he will suspect from such an untoward broken Scene, that the Dramma is not like to be regular: Indeed you shift too often, and to catch and confute you I must travel thro' the whole Compass; for no fooner can a man steer one way, but your Discourse, like the Wind, whips straight into another quarter; and about we must tack, or we must not make forwards at But I will infift no more at present on this dexterity of yours; you will afford your Friends many fresh Instances of it, through the whole course of this Letter hereafter. Onely I must note your forgetfulnels, or what elfe may I call it? For you took the Notion of Tradition very right, First Letter (p. 7.) where you alledg'd you had a larger and firmer Tradition for Scrip. ture than we had for us: You did not there, take Tradition of that Book, for the Book delivered; for then that Book had been the Delivery of its felf; and yet that Book had as good Title to be it's own Tradition, as you had to make the Points delivered by our Tradition to be the Tradition or Delivery of those Points. You granted too in the same place that the Latin and Greek Churches proceeded upon it; and, by granting this, confest there were as many Attesters went to make it up as there were Men, (at least Intelligent men) in the compass of the many vast Nations which those two Churches included: How come you then so much to forget your self as to parallel it bere to the pittiful Attestation of three or sour possibly prejudic't Relaters. But the reason of this self-contradicting and extravagant representation of Tradition is clear; it was your Interest to take it right there, and the same reason pre-

vail'd with you to take it wrong here.

5. But I am weary of fencing with Shadows, when I can take any occasion that leads me to treat of what's Substantial. Mistake me not, 'tis not your Discourse that obliges me to it; it had been a sufficient Anfwer to That, to let the Reader fee you purposely mistook the Nature of Tradition, to divert and perplex his Thoughts, and there let it rest. Yet, Because your taking Tradition wrong, for the Doctrines deliver'd, good use may be drawn from it, I shall, for the benefit of the Reader, not decline speaking to what you object. You make account (p. 7. & 8.) the Tradition of the Church deliver'd the Point of the Reall Prefence, & of Christ's being the Son of God, in General Words onely. Which, waving what has been alledg'd in my 2d. and 3d. Seft. I judg for divers other Reatons to be Impossible. For, besides that, if the Forefathers deliver'd onely the Words, they taught their Children (against the supposition) no Faith in these Points, for Faith has Jenje in it, and is not Faith if it have

have none, being in that case no true Judgment or Truth. who knows not that Words were inflituted and intended by Mankind to fignify fomething; and, therefore, 'tis inconfistent with the nature of the same Mankind. when at Age, especially the Wifer fort, not to hold some Sense or other to be fignify'd by those Words: and with the nature of Christians, not to instruct those whom they are to educate in Faith, with that Sense; as also with the nature of those who are to be Instructed, not to desire to know the Sense of the Tenets they are to believe. But, that Sense cannot be a General one, that is, Common to all the leveral Tenets now found among us (for it will not be General if it exclude any one) it must therefore abstract from all particulars, and be applicable to every one. Now there is no fuch Generical Notion or Sense which can be abstracted from Christ's Body, which is Living, and a piece of Bread, unless this, that they are both Quantitative or Mixt Bodies; to believe which would make a very extravagant Point of Faith; much less can such an Abstraction be made from Christ's Real Living Body, and some supernatural Gifts or Qualities, either in the Bread, or wrought in our Souls by Means of our receiving the Eucharist; For a Substance and a Quality differ toto genere (as the Logicians express it) that is, belong to different Commonest Heads, which have no Genus above them, or that can abstract from them. Least of all can any such Common Notion be abstracted from the Natural or True Son of God, and a meer Man; no more than there can from God and a Creature. Whence follows most evidently, that, since the Faithful must necessarily have always had some Meaning of those words in their hearts, and a general Sense of them is impossible, they must have ever had Particular Notions

Notions of those Words, determining their Sense to the one fignification, or the other; that is, either to mean Christ's Real Body, or not his Real Body; a True and Estential Godhead, or a meer Creature. My second Reason is, because Faith is Ordain'd to work through Charity, or to ftir up devour Affections in us; whence, as the diffance is Infinite in both cases, between one of those Senfes and the other, there being God on one fide, on the other a Creature; fo the Affections of the Soul wrought in us by our Faith, must either oblige us to pay an Infinite Veneration to a Creature if Christ's Real Body (and confequently God) be not there, or if Christ be not God; which is the greatest deviation from true Religion that is possible; or else, to be highly Irreverent, and to want the most efficacious Motive that can be imagin'd to excite and elevate our Devotion, if he be there, or Christ be indeed God. Nor can any middle disposition be invented that can make the Acts of the Soul hover between it's tendency towards an Infinite and Finite Being, or between an Infinite and Finite Reverence. I dare confidently conclude then. and dare avow it to be Demonstrable out of the Nature of Mankind, that either the one or the other Determinate Sense of those Words must have been held in all Ages, ever fince the Apostles time, by the Generality of the foregoing Faithful; more or less expresly, as those respective Points, broke out more or less into Christian Action; which their Duty could not but prompt and oblige them to deliver to their Children as occasion served; and consequently, that that Particular sense, and not onely (as you fancy) the General Words, must have descended by Tradition.

6. Next, my Position is, that, taking the word [Tradition] for Points descending by Tradition, as you

will needs have it, the Church has Power and Authority to explain the Sense and Meaning of them, and to oblige others to believe Her; and yet, that this hinders not the Infallibility of Tradition from confisting in holding the same to day that was deliver'd yesterday, &c. This is the difficulty, I conceive, that fo much troubles you. To clear which, you may please to reflect on what you know already by experience; that, let any man advance a fingle Tenet, and afterwards, upon occasion, fet himself to Explicate at large the Sense of that Proposition; 'tis plain, there will be found in that large Explication many particular Propositions: not adequately the same, but in part different from that which he went about thus elaborately and distinctly to explain; of which perhaps even himself was not aware while he did not reflect; not being yet invited to make it clearer, or dilate on it. And yet he held, even at first, the Sense (and not only the Words) nay the whole Sense of that main Tenet or Sentence; tho' he saw not distinctly every single Proposition contain'd in it, till he became oblig'd to Scan and Study his own undiffinguisht, but true, thoughts concerning it. The fame may be faid of every Sermon and it's Text, supposing it be rigorously held to; and no more be attended to but to explain it's intrinfick and full Meaning. In which case, the Preacher sticks not to assure his Auditory, that what he has Preach't to them all the while, is Gods Word; and to press them to regard it as such, as far as his small Authority over them can reach. And, had he more, in case he did verily judge his Explication of that Text was genuin, and, confequently, Christ's true Sense; he would questionless esteem himself bound to make use of that Authority to his utmost, to edify them with the Explicit Belief of each Particular contain'd

tain'd in so Excellent a Truth. This being so, why should not the same Priviledge be granted to the Church and her Pastours to explicate, upon due occasion, the Sense of Christ's Faith, in many particular Propositions involv'd in the main Tenet, (even tho' we should suppose them to be not heard of, perhaps not distinctly thought of, before) which is allow'd to every private man, and any ordinary Preacher? And, if those Governours of the Church be, by their Office, Confervers of Christs Law, and see that these Propositions, newly fingled out, are included, in any Point of Faith receiv'd upon their Rule; why ought they not, out of their Duty and Zeal to preferve Christ's Faith Intire. both define these Points, and also use their Authority to oblige the Faithful to accept them as fuch; or, if they disaccept them and express themselves against them, to exclude them from their Communion?

7. But still, fay you, these particular Points came not down by Tradition, nor were deliver'd as held vesterday, and so upwards till Christ's Time; for they were not held at all before they were defin'd or declar'd. I distinguish: These Propositions were beld ever and descended ever as they were involved in the Intire Point: in the bowels of which, the Sense of those others were found: But, as fingled out in fuch and fuch particularizing manners of Expression, they were (perhaps) not held ever. I fay, not held ever formerly, at least not universally. Which is the true reason why some Private Writers, nay possibly some Great Men, might (out of a dutiful fear not to add to Faith) have doubted of them, or difaccepted them, perhaps oppos'd them: till the Collective Church, or some Great Body of them. who are able to look more intelligently into those Points, declar'd and unfolded the Sense of the main Article, in which

which they were hitherto enwrapt: For, befides that it is their peculiar Office, and (as it were) Trade, to look deeper into the Sense of the several Points of Faith. then others do; 'tis very Rational to conceive, that those Tenets were found more particularly explicated in some parts of the Body of the Church than in athers; which makes it difficult to affirm any particular Point defin'd fince Christ's time, was not in many places of the Church held ever, tho' it was not in All: nor made as yet any great Noise, being as yet neither oppos'd, (which alarum'd the Church to reflect heedfully upon it;) nor to powerfully recommended, which oblig'd the Faithful more briskly and manifeftly to own it. What difficulty or difagreeableness to the connatural course of things there is in all this, I cannot imagin; Nor, I am confident, your felf; unless your thoughts, startling at the unwelcom Conclusion, should recoil back to your former mistake, that only Words came down by Tradition; or that Christ's Sense was never in the Breaft of the Diffusive Church (his Spouse, and the Pillar and Ground of Truth) and in the Understandings of her Pastours; which takes all Faith out of the world, and deftroys the very Effence of a Church: Or, lastly, that many particular (or rather partial) Propositions are not included in the Total Sense of ever ry main Tenet, and disclos'd by a full explication of it: whence it comes to be discover'd to be a Part of It, that is, in part It.

8. I am forry you will needs give me occasion to interrupt such Discourses, as tend to the clearing some Truth, to defend Tradition against your reproachful mistakes; with which, in defiance to all Sense, I had almost said against your own Conscience too, you have loaded it. But these are some of your Extrinsecal Ar-

guments,

guments, which, for want of better, jealoufy of your cause and reputation prevails with you still to make use of; and, so, you will triumph mightily if they be past over unconfuted. You attempt, p. 8. to play your Politick Game, and to conquer us by dividing us in our Rule of Faith; tho' it cost your Credit very dear to effect it. To this end, running on in your former mistake of the plain word [Tradition] and that it means Points and Articles, you tell us fadly that this denying to the Church of Rome Power to explain Tradition takes off from its Power & Authority. That it resolves all into meer Humane Faith - meer Natural Reason-That the utmost it can amount to, is resolving Faith into a Logical Demonstration. Then follows the Holy Cant. And is this the Faith Christians are to be fav'd by ? what Grace of God, what Affiftance of the Holy Spirit are necessary to fuch Blacloans. a Faith as this ? But for this I refer you to the Hæresis Blacloana. You should have added *[where Dr. Tillet fon, and my felf have the honour to be brought in for writing fo Catholickly]. Truly Sir, you have given us a very pretty Period; in which many of your modish qualifications vy for the precedency; and 'tis hard to determin which has most Title to it. Nay, p. 13. you tell Mr. G. that our Grounds overthrow the Church's Authority in matters of Faith, and proceed upon Pelagian Principles. Your Charge, Sir, is very grievous and heavy; and therefore, unless the Evidence you bring to prove it, be answerable, you will manifest your self to proceed upon a new Christian (in truth, an old Unchristian) Principle; but, which fuits it feems with your homour, and is requifite to your Caufe, Calumniare fortiter - I need not tell you whose it was.

9. To stop your mouth therefore once for all concerning Harefis Blacloana, know that that Book, tho' p. 9.

See Harefis .

Printed in a Catholick Country, could not be licenc't; but came out furreptitiously, without any Printers name at it, or any other then a fictitious name of the Author. Know that it was fent to Rome, and was compar'd there with the Doctrin of Tradition which it impugn'd. And yet it was not found that this Do-Ctrine either overthrew the Churches Authority in matters of Faith, nor that there was any Pelagianism in it: Otherwise those Books which were accus'd of it. and defended Tradition to the height, had not escap't their Censure. This shews how shallow this Exception of yours is, and to what mean shifts you are reduc't. fince you can quote a fquabbling Book of one Roman. Catholick against another about Tradition, in stead of answering the Argument for it. An ill-natur'd man might (you know very well) name Authors of another Communion, not too well thought and spoken of by Eminent Persons of their own side, and written against too by others. Yet I shall not be so like some I know, to turn a Dispute into a Wrangle; but shall apply my felf to shew how far the Doctrine of Tradition is from deferving to be charg'd with such injurious reflexions.

10. But before I go farther, I must take notice of your quoting F. Warner here, p. 8. and your appealing to him, where you put Haresis Blacloana in the Margent: By which you seem to hint, that he is the Author of that Book, and an Adversary to the Doctrin of Tradition; even so far as to judg it not sound in Faith: for, no less aversion could make you very much question whether F. W. would absolve any man who professed to embrace Catholick Faith on Mr. G's. Grounds. But, as that very Reverend Person declares, he never saw that Book till some of them were presented him bound, so himself has forestal'd your little policies, aim-

P. 13.

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ing to fet us at variance in our Tenets, in his Anti-Haman p. 209. [We Catholicks have Fuith, because we believe firmly those Truths that God bas reveal d, because be reveal'd them to the Church: Which, as a faithful Witness, gives hitherto, and will give to the end of the World Teffimony to that Revelation. And we cannot be Hereticks because we never take the liberty to thuse our selves, or admit what others chase; but we take bona fide what is Deliver'D us, revealed by the greatest Authority imaginable, on Earth, which is that of the Catholick Church.] He proceeds: [Here then is the Tenure of our Faith. The Father fent bis only begolten Son, con-Substantial to himself, into the world; and what he heard of his Father he made known to us, for 15. 11. The Father and Son fent the H. Ghoft; and hee did not speak of himself, but what he heard, that he spoke, Fo. 16. 13. The Holy Ghost fent the Apostles, and they declared unto us what they had feen and heard, a Jo. 1. 3. The Apostles sent the Highest and Lowest Prelates in the Church; and the Rule by which they fram'd their Decrees was, Let nothing be alter'd in the Depositum, Let no Innovation be admitted in what's Deliber'D: Quod Traditum est non innovetur: But he more expresty yet declares himself no Adversary to this way ibid. p. 267. Your Friend Mr. G. B. had call'd this way of proving Doctrines, that They had them from their Fathers, they from theirs, a Dew method of proving Popilb Doctrines; and receives for Answer these words. Tou discover your Ignorance, in Saying that Method was Dem, or that Arnaud invented it : Mr. Thomas White bad it before Arnaud : Mr. Fither a Jefuite, before T. W. Bellarmin before him; & St. Auflin, St. Stephen Pope, & Tertullian before them all. Where you fee he both allows: this very Method we take, as practis'd by Modern Controvertifts,

provertifts of note a may by forme of his own Order foo. whom he is far from difapproving ; and by Antient Fathere also, whom he highly venerates.

Your petty Project thus defeated, I fhall endeavour to open your Eyes, if they be not (which God grant they

be not) wilfully four, of and

The Afferters of Tradition observing, that the Adverfaries they had to deal with admitted Christ's Doctrin to be Divine, held it the most compendious way to put a speedier End to all Controversies, (which Experience taught them were otherwise liable to be spun out into a voluminous length) and the most efficacious Method to conclude all the Heterodox, of what denomination foever, to prove, That the Doctrin held now by the Catholick Church was Christ's or the self-same that was taught at first by Himself and his Apostles. It was bootless for them to attempt to prove this by Texts of Scripture, manag'd by their Private Wits: For, the Truth of our Faith depending on Christ's Teaching it, if it were not Absolutely Certain Christ taught it, it could not be evine't with Absolute Certainty to be True. Now, the same Experience inform'd them, that no Interpretation of Scripture, made by Private Judgments, (of themselves, or others) could arrive to fuch a pitch of Certainty; and, confequently, would leave Faith under the fcander lous ignominy of being possibly, and, perhaps actually false. It was to as little purpose to alledge against such Adversaries the Divine Affiftance to the Church, or Christs Promise of Infallibility to it, as you very weakly object to Mr. G. (p. 16.) as not once afferted by him. For the this was believed by the Faithful, yet it was difound by all those Hetenodox; and, being it felf a point of Faith, it feem'd improper to be produc't for a Rule of Faith. Belides, how fhould they prove this Divine Allifance? tak neggia-

If by Scripture interpreted by their Private Judgments these not being Absolutely Certain, it would have weaken'd the Establishment of that Grand Article, which to the Faithful was a kind of Principle to all the rest, in regard that upon the Certainty of it, the Security they had of all the other Articles was to depend. If, by the Divine Authority of the Church it felf, it was not fo cafie to defend that method not to run round in a Circle: whereas all Regular Discourse ought to proceed straight forwards. These Considerations oblig'd them to fet. themselves to make out by Natural Mediums, that the Human Authority of fuch a Great Body; as was that of the Church, was Abfolutely Certain, or Infallible, in conveying down many visible and notorious Matters of Fact; and, among the rest, (or rather far above the rest, the Subject being Practical, and of infinite Concern) that fuch and such a Doctrin was first taught to the Age contiguous to the Apolles, and continued ever fince. By this means they refolv'd the Doctrin of the present Church into that of Christ, and his Authority; and, consequently, (thefe being suppos'd by both Parties to be Divine) into the Divine Authority, granted by all to be the Formal Motive of Divine Faith.

12. This is the true state of that Affair. And now, I beseech you, Learned Sir, Where's the Polagianism? Where is the least Ground, or shadow of Ground, for all these bugbear words and salse accusations, which, to make them sink deeper into the Reader's Belief, and create a more perfect abhorrence of our Tenet, come mask't here under an affected shew of Godlines? All hold their Faith relies on the Divine (or Christs) Authority, into which they finally resolve it: and all Catholicks hold Grace necessary to believe the Mysteries of Divine Faith; tho' all, perhaps, do not judge Grace needful to be-

*P. 154

lieve upon Human Authority, this Matter of Fact, viz. That Christ taught it. Yet my felf in * Faith vindicated; feeing that the admitting this Truth would oblige the Heterodox to relinquish their ill-chosen Tenets, and return to the Church, against which they had a strong aversion; did there declare my particular Sentiment, That God's Grace and fome Affiftance of the Holy Ghoft was requir'd, to make them willing to fee the force even of this Natural Demonstration, so much against their Humour and Interest. Is it Pelagianism to conclude, that Human Motives, which are Preliminaries to Faith. and on which the affuredness of Faith it felf depends, as to us, are Truly Certain? And, Might you not with 'as much reason say the same, if one should maintain the Absolute Certainty of our Senses, which is one of those Preliminaries? How strangely do you misrepresent every thing you are to meddle with! How constantly do you make your voluntary mistake of every Point serve for a Confutation of it! Tis confest, & ever was. That the Human Authority of the Church, or Tradition, begets only Human Faith, as its immediate Effect; but, by bringing it up to Christ, it leads us to what's Divine; yet not by its own force, but by Vertue of the Supposition agreed upon. That Christ's Doctrin is such. Is it Pelagianism to fay, we must use our Reason to come to Faith; or, do you pretend all the World must be the worst of Phanaticks. and use none? Or, does it trouble you, we offer to justifie, that the Reasons we bring to make good that Preliminary, which, in our way of Discoursing, is to introduce Faith, are not fuch as may deceive us? And that we do not confess they are Fallible, or may deceive us, as you grant of your Interpretations of Scripture, which ground your Belief? No furely, we shall not quit the Certainty we have, because you have none. For if it be not

Certain such Doctrines are indeed Christ's, who is our Law-giver, we cannot be fure they are True; their Truth depending on his Authority; and, would you have us for fear of Pelagianism confess all our Faith may perhaps be but a fory? But, into what an unadvisedness does your Anger transport you, to run the Weapon through your own Side to do us a Mischief? You bore us in hand (First Letter p. 7.) that you had a larger and firmer Tradition for Scripture than we have for what we pretend to. Yet, this Tradition could cause no more but Human Faith; for I do not think you will fay you had Divine Faith, before you were got to your Rule of Divine Faith. By your Discourse then your felf are an Arrant Pelagian too: Perhaps worse than we, because you pretend to a larger and firmer (Human) Tradition than you fay we have; may, you pretend it to be Absolutely Certain too, which is a dangerous Point indeed. Pray, have a care what you do: for, you are upon the very brink of Pelagianism. The knowing you have the true Books of Scripture, is a most necessary Preliminary to your Faith; for, without knowing that, you cannot pretend to have any Faith at all; and, if it be Pelagianism in us to hold fuch Preliminaries absolutely Certain, I fear the danger may come to reach you too. Yet you have one Way, and but one, to escape that damnable Herefy : which is, that you do not go about to demonstrate the Absolute Certainty of Your Tradition, as we do of Ours. That, that is the very Venom of Pelagianism. But, take comfort, Sir, my life for yours, you will never fall so abominably into the mire as to demonstrate or conclude any thing: (For, what Idea foever you may frame of it, we mean no more by Demonstrating, but plain honest Concluding.) Your way of Discourting does not look as if it intended to conclude or demonstrate.

monstrate. Tis so wholly (pass for as great a Man as you will) made up of mistakes, misrepresentations, petty cavils, witty shifts, untoward explications of your own Words, constant prevarications, and many more such neat dexterities, that whatever fault it may through human frailty, provok't by powerful Necessity, be liable to, I dare pawn my life it will never be guilty of that hainous Crime of demonstrating or concluding any thing; no, not the Absolute Certainty of your sirmer Tradition. And, yet, unless you can prove or conclude 'tis thus Certain, 'tis a Riddle to us, how can you

13 Pray be not offended, if on this occasion I ask You a plain downright Question. Is it not equally blamable to

either hold or fay 'tis fuch.

Fallify your Adversaries Tenet perpetually, as 'tis to falfify his Words? Nay, is it not worfe, being less liable to discovery, and so more certainly and more per-niciously Injurious? And can any thing excuse You from being thus faulty, but Ignorance of our Tenet? I fear that Plea will utterly fail you too, and leave you expos'd to the Censure of every fincere Reader, when I shew him to his Eve that You could not but know all this before. For, in Error Non-plust p. 121. Sect. 8. You must needs have read the quite contrary Doctrine, and how those who maintain Tradition do resolve their Faith. [There is no necessity then of proving this Infallibility (viz. Of the Church) meerly by Scripture interpreted by Virtue of this Infallibility. Nor do the Faithful or the Church commit a Circle in believing that the Church is Infallible, upon Tradition. For, - they befieve onely the supernatural Infallibility built on the Assistance of the Holy Ghost, that is on the Church's Sanctity; and, this is prov'd by the Human Authority of the Church to have been held ever from the Beginning; and the force of the Human Testimony of the Church is prov'd

Error Non-

by Maxims of meer Reason] The same is more at large deliver'd in the foregoing Section, and in divers other places. Now, this Book was Writ against your felf; and, fo, 'tis as hardly Conceiveable you should never have read it, as 'tis Unconceiveable how you should ever answer it: And, if you did read it, what was become of your fincerity when you counterfeited your Ignorance of our Tenet? All is refolo'd (lay you, here, p. 9.) into meer Human Faith, which is the unavolvable consequence of the Doctrin of Oral Tradition. How shrewdly positive you are in your Sayings, how modest and meek in your Proofs! Nothing can be more manifest from our constantly avow'd Doctrin, and your own opposing it too, than 'tis, that Tradition resolves all into Christ's and the Apostles Teaching: And, pray, do you hold that Christ is a meer man, or that the Believing Him is a meer human Faith, or that the Doctrin taught by Him and Them is meerly Human? If this be indeed your Tenet, I am forry I knew it not before; for then I should have thought fit to begin with other Principles to confute you: And, I pray God, by your impugning known Truths, you may never need e'm. I fee I had reason to alledge in Faith Vindicated, that the Grace of God was requifit to make men affent to a Natural Conclusion when it came very cross to their Interest: For, it appears too plain tis exceedingly needful to affift you here in a meer Point of Common Morality: which is, to enable you not to fpeak and represent things directly contrary to your own knowledge. And, Tam forry I must tell you, and too evidently prove it, that the greatest part of your Writings against Catho. licks, when the Point is to be manag'd by Reason, is (in a manner) made up of fuch study'd Infinceri-

14 You give us another Instance of this Indisposi-

tion of your Will, p. 13. where you tell us Mr. M. fays. that the first thing which was propos'd, and indeed the onely subject Mr. G. had any purpose to discourse on was, whether Protestants bad a Ground of Absolute Certainty for their Faith or not? This you do not deny; but turn it off to a quite different business; and then slide from that to another, till you had wheel'd about the Question from what was intended to the Point you thought best ferv'd your turn to shuffle in. Here (say you) the Faith poken of is that Faith whereby we are Christians. How? Are Protestants and Christians then Convertible Terms or Synonyma's? Are there not many forts of Christians which are not Protestants? And is it not plain, and not contradicted by your felf, that it was demanded, whether (your) Protestants had a Ground of Absolute Certainty for their (that is Protestant) Faith? Does not the word [their] fignify theirs as distinct from all other forts of Christians? And is it come now to signify theirs simply as Christians, or as conjoyn'd with all the rest? This is too open dodging to pass upon the Reader. 'Tis granted, you hold many of the same Christian Points which Catholicks do; but 'tis deny'd, you can as you are Protestants (I mean still such Protestants as are of your Principles) hold them to be Absolutely Certain, or hold them upon fuch Grounds as are able to Support that Firm and Unalterable Assent, call'd faith: The Grounds proper to your Protestants being (as was shewn in my Former Letter, Sect. 24.) to hold them upon the Letter interpreted by your felves. Of which Letter, by virtue of your Principles, you can have no Absolute Certainty (as shall be shewn hereafter:) and of that Letter Interpreted by your private Judgments, much less. In a word, either you speak of Points held by Protestants, which you pretend to be all the same Doctrin that was taught by Christ and his Apostles; and then

Ibid.

then you are distinguisht not onely from those Christians call'd Catholicks, but from Socinians, Lutherans, and (to omit others) Calvinists too, if you be one of those that hold Episcopacy to be of Divine Right: Or else you mean the Assent, given to those Points of Protestant Faith, on their pretended Rule; and then, you must shew your Assent is more Absolutely Gertain than that of the three last, and divers others who Dissent from you in their Tenets, and yet go upon the Same Rule; and make it out to us, that, tho' it be both theirs and yours, yet still'tis yours in particular, or peculiar-

ly yours, as you are such Protestants.

15. Your next Prevarication is much worfe. After you had shov'd Protestant Faith into Christian Faith. you throw it a Barr and a half further off by virtue of an Id est. Absolute Certainty of the Christian Faith: i.e. (fay you) of the Grounds on which we believe the Scripture to contain the Word of God, or all things necessary to be believ'd by us in order to salvation. This Id eft, like Pacolets wooden Horse, has a Charm to transfer us from one Pole to the other in an instant. By virtue of its all-powerful Magick, Christian Faith is made to be the same with the Grounds on which we believe the Scripture to contain the Word of God; fo that, according to you, Faith is the same with your Grounds for Scripture's being your Ground; that is, Faith is made the fame with the Grounds for your Ground of Faith. What a medley of Sense is this, and how many folds have we here involving one another! Christian Faith is Divine, these Grounds and the Faith built on them is Human, being the Testimony of Men: Are these two the same Notion? Had I amind to be Quarrelsome, how easily, how justly too, might I retort your former Calumny against Tradition; and object that this way of yours resolves :

resolves all into meer Human Faith, meer Natural Reafon, that it makes God's Grace and Affiftance of the Holy Ghoft unneceffary to Faith; and then ask, Is this the Faith Christians are to be fav'd by? And reckon up twenty other absurdities springing from this ill-grounded Polition. But I am now to trace your transferring Faculty. In your First Letter p. 7. you speak onely of Absolute Certainty as to the Rule of your Faith, viz. the Scripture: Dr. St. Second but here the cafe is alter'd; and Certainty of Scripture Letter, p. 14 is turn'd into Certainty of the Grounds on which we be-lieve the Scripture to contain the Word of God. Thele flippery doings, and not any Reasons you bring, make you Inconfutable; for, we must set upon the Proteus in all his shapes ere we can bind him. The Question is not, whether Scripture Contains the Word of God, that is, his Sense, or our Faith, but (which we cannot mind you of too often, for all will be too little to make you take notice of it) how the Sense contain'd there can be got out thence, or be fignify'd to us with Absolute Certainty, even in the very highest Points of Christian Faith, and what Grounds you have to bring about this Effect: For, you can profess no Absolute Certainty of any one point, till you have made it out with Absolute Certainty, that the Sense, you pretend contain'd in Scripture is it's genuin Meaning.
This is your true task, if you would prove the Ab-Solute Certainty of your Protestant Faith, or your Faith as depending on your Principles. But of this we hear

16. And I befeech you, to what end is it to tell us you are speaking of your Rule or Ground of Faith, if it carry you not thorow to any one particular; no, not those Points which are most Fundamental, and to most necessary for the Salvation of Mankind? Since,

not a syllable.

notwithstanding you have your Rule, you are still as far to feek as before in all a Rule should be good for? Remember, the Question and Mr. T's expectation was about the Absolute Certainty of Protestant Faith, by vertue of your Rule or Ground; and, therefore, if your Rule does not reach to Absolute Certainty of the main Points of Faith at least, you are still at a loss both for your Faith, and for a Ground of your Faith. Yet this, conscious of it's failure, you feem unwilling to fland to, by still fliding filently over it, or flipping by it when it lies just in your way. For, You tell us, pag. 20. that your Faith rests on the Word of God as its Absolute Ground of Certainty. Which by the way is another little shuffle; for you should have said absolutely-Certain Ground, not Absolute Ground of Certainty. But let that pass, and let the horse-mill go for the mill-horse. You proceed. But the particular. Certainty as to this or that Doctrine, depends on the Evidence that it is contain'd in Scripture. You ought to have faid, if you would make your Faith fo Certain as you pretended [We are absolutely Certain such and such particular Points are contain'd there] otherwise your General Ground comes not up to the Question, nor does your Faith any service at all, since it leaves it still Uncertain; of which more hereafter. Especially, since you pretended, or rather declar'd openly, p. 14. that you now held all the same Doctrin that was taught by Christ and his Apostles: Which Profession reaches to all the Points of Faith, and not onely to your Ground of Faith. I must confess you render'd that Protession insignificant, and cancell'd the obligation as foon as you had made it, in the Explication of those words immediately following; which makes those hearty expressions [Absolutely Certain of all the same Doctrin] amount to no more,

* Ibid.

but that you resolve your Faith into Scripture. We must, I see, deal with you as those who have a pretence in Court do with Great Courtiers; who lose their repute with them as ill-bred, and unmannerly, if they will needs take them at their word, and do not diffinguish between what's spoken and what's means. Your Answer was very honest and direct [We are absolutely Certain we now hold all the same Doctrin that was taught by Christ and his Apostles. The Comment is this, [1 fram'd my Answer on purpose to shew that our Faith is not to be resolv'd into what Christ taught, any otherwise than as it is convey'd to us by the Writings of the Apostles & Evangelists.] Whereas, if there be so much as one word of [Writing or Evangelists] even hinted in your Anfwer it felf (unless the Word Taught meant Writ, which cannot be because we never read that Christ writ any Books) or the least Semblance of reason, for making this Skewing Explication, but to shuffle off your too large Concession, I will confess my self too shallow to fathom the profound depth of your inscrutable sense. Refolve then your Faith, in God's Name, into what you will, so you but shew us an Absolutely Certain Connexion, between the Points refolved, and the Rule into which you profess to resolve it : Otherwise 'tis no Resolution of Faith, if the continued Chain of Motives winding it up to the First Truth, or God's infinite veracity, hangs flack. Such Incoherence ferves not for Faith, which must be indissolubly connected to the Formal Motive of all our Faith; else the Resolution of it may be shatter'd, and broke to pieces by the way, ere we come there. Which if it may, then the Refolution is no Refolution, for that speaks Connexion of the Motives ; and. Faith thus refolv'd may perhaps all be Falle, and fo is no Faith. 'Tis your work then to shew in particular

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reular, when you come to it, and at prefent in general, char your Rule gives you Absolute Certainty of the Prints of Faith, more than it does the Socialian. who have the same Rule, and profess to follow it as much as you do for your heart, and yet erre enormonfly as Nay, in effect they take the fame Method too to interpret Scripture which you do; for, tho you give good words to the confent of former ages, yet your Grounds do not allow it Absolute Certainty in bringing down Doctrin or interpreting Scripture : and less than such a Certainty, and in such things, sighifies nothing in our cases And itis either by your Rule and Method, you can arrive thus certainly at the Senfer of Scripture, or by nothing. If you could once with Abfolute Certainty convince the Socinians of Obstinacy against a Clear Truth by your Rule, on Method, or both together; I mean, if you could make it clear to them that your Rule of Faith; cannot possibly bear any other Sense, so that the indifferent part of the world judg'd them wilful adherers to a false Interpretation, or that you could filence them, and put them to open shame for adhering to it, you would do fomthing ! Otherwife, your Marting afide still from the Absolute Certainty of the Points, even the p. 14 you pretended to be Absolutely Gertain you hold them All, and talking to us of nothing but a General Ground, is meer thuffling , and thews, plainly you meant not really in that Answer of yours to Mr. 6's first Question, ere you spoke of all the Detrin ; Which includes every Rarticular Point , for that by All it feems you meant Mone. Tis very paradoxical to fee you diftinguish here (p. 14) between the Doctrin taught by Christ, and that which was taught by the Apostles. -The reason why you do it, is to infinuate into our Readers dental

Readers that twe derive the fource of our Bradition from Christ's Deaching torally (as the five affirm of Moles delivering an unwrittendaw) lelfe to what porpofe this Diffinction? The Tradition we slay chim to has no fuch obfeure Original; it takes sitsoife from the whole Body of Primitive Christians Inothe Apostles daysoldispers bin Great in Blindes noverothe World, and feetled in the Knowledge of whise Faith by means of their Dreathing. Souther Eradition flores into motion from a most Publick and motorious mutter of Fact, wie Chat the Apolhes daught the First Christians stucked Faith. Torn hat simaginable mourpose then twas this frivolous within tion brought ship Tou knew this was your Tenets and we knew well your Rale was Scripture. What needed then this fourfling Paraphrase ali By Tradition, you know we mean a Tethinoni for Doctrin peceivid, salf the fourcebe weak. or that the Body of the Witnesters of it's Deliverylat first, and successively afterwards, was final, the Fradition is, confequently, weak in proportion wift Great, it was fromer ftill, according as the multitude of the Acteflers was more numerous, and their Oredibleness omore unexcepcionable in Wellubut admir your Faith be not refoly d'into what Ohrift taught by his own mouth, but what the Apostles taught us from him, why must you necessarily resolve your Faith into their Writings only? Did the Apostles when they went to convert the world go with Books in their bunds, or Wordhan their Months a Or were those Words a goodeless when it came from their Months; than when they put them in a Book? Or, lastly, does any Command from Christ appear to write the Book of Scripture, or any Revelation before hand that it was to be a Rule of Fath to the future Church & No fuch marrer and the Accidental

dental ogcasions of its writing at first and it's Acceptarion afterwards, bar any luch Presences ? On the other fide them Grand Commission was not Scribite. but only Predicate Evangelium, Yet, you can flubber, this over without taking notice of it, and carry it as When Apoldes Tracking mean't Writing only, and that they raight the World no more than they writ. Sure you do not mean the Apollies took Texts out of their own Books, and preacht Sermons upon then as you do now. Why must it be quite forgotten then, and buy ried in filence, that they taught any thing by word of month or prenche the Golpel publickly? Allow that to be denetty Sacred as what is write and to be embrac't well atteffed and blame the Atteffation and Tradisionas it may be found to deferve; but still, when you would put your own Tenet as distinguish's from ours, be to kind as to put ours too and do not fland talking to us and fooling your Readers, with the Rabbies pretended Tradition from Moles his mouth: no more like ours than an Apple is like an Oyster. Again, this Refolution of your Faith gives every one Absolute Certainty of his Faith, who believes he has Ab-School Corneliney of Scripture's letter, and that it contains the World of God. And you Experience cells us, that whole Bodys of Learned men believe all this, and yet differ frhat is one fide errs) in the highest Mysteries of Christian Paith: Whence follows, that both fides, by this Doctrin, are Absolutely Certain of their Faith; pos Ado (for example) is Abiohitely Certain there is a Trinitw and that Christ is God; the other, that there is no Trinity, and that Christ is not God. This feeins but a very odd account of the Cartainty of Protestant the difficulty, whether fame Divine Revelation Hard

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to the 2d Question p. 15 It was ask't there By what Certain Rule do you know that the New Testament which we now have, does contain all the Divine Revelations of Ghrift, and his Apofiles & This Question evidently aims at two things: viz. First whether some Books writ by the Apollies were not loft a (as appears by shofe Words which we now have of For if they were then be ing penn'd by men divinely infaired, they must neces farily contain fome Divine Revelations in them too as well as did the other; and theh how does it appear there were not more or other Revelations contain'd in them than were contained in the books now extant The other is that you know well very many hold that diverse Divine Revelations were delivered down by Tradition, and not all by Writing. Let's fee now how your Answer futes with this Question. By the Universal Testimony (ay you) of the Christian Church from the Apoliles times downwards This Reply if peri tinent to that Question, must mean that this Emirocafal Testimony ascertains us, that the Scriptures we have now, contains all the Divine Revelations. But, when you come to explain your felf ut comes to no more but that, The Testimony of the Apostolical, and the Jucqued ing Churches did by degrees make men fix upon the Core tain Canon of the New Testament. What a flight have you taken on a fudden! Where will you pitch when you light? I am fure not on the place where you took wing, and where you ought to have flay'd For.
What is their Tellimony for the Booksman new have, to the Books which have or may have preriff't and to their containing some other Divine Revelations ? Or, What is the fixing upon the Certain Canon of the Books to the difficulty, whether some Divine Revelations did not descend by Tradition without Writing ? Do the A-Aposto-

postolicated fucceeding i Churches nitestify either of theferen On Hayou so much as presend they dolo Nota syllables of odis do you lay or take noticevof shand! for not a fyllable have you Answerd to his Question. Which was not about the Canon of Scripture, or how you would refelde your Faith; with which which tuelia pother over and over but, whether the New Left amond the halle notes contain de lithe Doning Revetations & If your explicate Scripture no bester for your Faith, than you do your own words here, you will questionless make a very extraordinary piece of work of it. Your Answers come now, and then pretty home, the Smartness of the Quellions obliging you tolice but your Explications of them immediately after feem purposely fram'd that we should not take you at your Word in your Answerson shiw of a nawlink and

Question, Mr. 6. endeavoured to preis for a portinent return to what was demanded and therefore puts his fourth Question thus. Was that Universal Testimony an Infallible Rule to assure us certainly down to our time, that the New Tallament soutained all the Divine Revelations of Christiand his Applies en Your Answer was a The Universal Testimony of the Christian Church concerning the Book of Scripsure and the Dostrin contain detheron, is a sufficient Sound to make us certain of all matters necessary

row-sakretion bad by ment of how and restained in 196 Here are many allings worth our Admiration. In the Here are many allies Worth our Admiration. In the Ariver to the Onely to affected the Supplement of the Ariver to the Third Question here, at le onely to affure us that the New Testament contains all the Divine Revelations: But, here it is to service his of the Dedrine too contain die it which, if you mean asyour Words seem to sound,

P . 17.

is all we require in our Dradition Rule. There may be former other fubtle meaning lying yeu couche in their Woods, which Time may diffeover the westinger yes, till heitiat made the Lock bring the liey. Again, ris askit if it be an Infatible Rule of Tis answered. The a Out ficient Ground Tist selfe in the trellimine affiles in oereainly ale New Tellament comming all the Droune Mebelutions his Tiss affirer Unit makes in an rube of hit Matrens recessary conocie Salvation : which is clearly invended for a diminishing expression, and arques forme fear of undertaking for Att the Divine Reve lations being recontained where cor Sil the Doctrin what was tamen by Christ and his Apollies, we was pretended 191141 One would verily imagin by this imputable Artwer, the Da St. and Ma St were playing at Cross-par-poses, the Answer is so wide from the Question, at least that there is fome indirect defign lies torking ; it being fo opposite to the wayes of honest Nature When one wills a politive Qualtion, all Mankind expects a Pofitive Antiver to the very words as they ly, & or No: Or, if the words be ambiguous, firthe duty of the An-Asker, if prefent, ere he answers ; without which, in thaceare, ris impenible to reply pertinently. But, les not vourtemper nor interest to use fuel clear and open candour. For, you faw that great multirudes had the Letter thus fecur'd to them, yer had not Abforme Contames that and the Divine Revellations are contain din it; therefore by adding [and rob Dock in contain deberois you had fome faint hopes you might be fafe. Again, you faw well, that, should you grant Universal Testi-mony to be an Infallible Rule, you would hazard to grant too much to Tradition, and all the learned Jests You have broke upon us for afferting Mallibility would

An badicasion your felf: abgrefore grant it you durft not. Nor met durftryou deny it to be un Infallible Rule for then if fince one of the poosit multiforcibly (be) you multiaffirm into be a Bellible Rule : And then the commorr sence of all Mankind (Mr. Z. amongst the rest) would be justly foundatized at the non fente: For an inrelication Ground that may be the patiet wink into Falling. and merturn what subvittoon in the ferves not the name pfoa Ground; and a Rule which may perhaps miflead me when I fallowit, is in reality no Rale: Belides, should you declare 'tis a Fallible Role, Men would wonder with suhat fenfe you could pretend that a Fallible Teltimony (nav. which you confess to be such) can make you Absolutely Gertain of the thing it attests lit being the dame as coprofess Lgrant they may all be detected in what sbey sell me, yet I am absolutely Centain, by chein very Hoftimony, abati what they tell me is Que. What could gourdo then in ther perplexity, being neither in condition to allow Infallshility, nor avow Fullibility; and danding gor'd with both the Horns of the Dilemma or Contradiction? Why, you were forc't to call in your wond and and dear Reind Phillietent Dettainty] rd helpyou out as a dead blunger For; this is able to idomore than Minucle striks can divide an Indivitible, and bur a middle between two Contradictories; by thowing the World's Containty, that is neither Infallible nor Hallible; but between both, or mixt of both we may Gonagin, walf the one, bill the other. Laftly, fearing that you would be driven at length (as you mall) to bring your Rule home to particular Roints, and knowing t'e Sociaians, and other late sprung Heretical Congregarions (whom you ought to acknowledge Christian Churches, fince they hold fiffly to that which you maintain here is the onely Bule of Christian Faith) de-

ny dynany of those, which you hold Diotae Reviews to be contain & in Scriptucci yeary more the contrary hold they are exclused thence; and than the opporter Te nets are contained there a therefore you wery prudently and warily chang'd & Allabe Divine Retielations] which were the wonds of the Oydition and flathing for me celling for out Salvation of Providing thus a ledunity for their Souls at least, the moundfuld out for their He rourse and a kind of Excule for the incertainty of your Rule, which perimitted the followers of it to run aftray; and withal a Retreat for your salf . In all which deep terous Afrecations, san this due commendation multibe allow devous to have acted very wifely and politickly to it must be absolutely deny'd you have given any Answerselesto the Question . The Words which you would obtrude apon us for an Answer, carry indeed presty show, and shift it off with much cunning a bir when we come to look into their feafe, with an Eve directed to the Question they facint slide to quite other matters; and the whole Reply, in a manner, is made up of different Notions from what was ask't. Nor can bliken the Replies you generally make to our Oueftions or the Explications you make of your own Anfivers; to any thing better than to that mocks Exposition of the First Verse in Genelis, which Luther made for your Friend Zuinglins's linterpretation of Hoeel Corous maum., Deug God that is a Cuckew; erequit created)that is devoused a Calum & Terram (Heaven and Banth) Stravis a Hedge Sparrompuith bones, and feethere and alla 20. You pur a protty Similatude indeed to Illustrate your own Tenet; but in reference to our main Queftion, the Absolute Certainty of your kind of Protestant Faith by your Grounds this to far from running on four legs, that it is in many regards, lame on the right,

P. 17, 18.

(and indeed onely) foot it ought to fland on, and (which is worse) is perhaps against your self. You resemble the Holy Scripture to a purse full of Gold and Silver; left By a Father, and entrusted to Executours; who tell his Son, this is all his Father left him; and, if they deal grafy with him, do certainly deliver all it contains. This the Primitive Church, Christ's Executours, did. By delivering us the Scripture; and affuring as all Divine Truths, which respect Mans Salvation, were contain d there in the Lump; among which, some were Gold Points, fome Sylver Points; but, having the Parfe of Scripture, we have the one as well as the other, and, confequently, all matters necessary to our Salvation, these being of greatest moment. Thus stands the Similitude, for, fun it cannot; and the fumm of it (as far as I apprehend it) amounts to this; that, because Scripture contains all, and Protestants have Scripture, therefore, they have all. A firange kind of Discourse! As if, because they have it in a Book, therefore, they have it in their Minds or Souls. in which, and, no where elfe, Faith is to relide. And as if a Man, were a jot the more learned, for having purchast Aristotles Works, and reading, and not underflanding them.

on, in this Similitude; as, that you have any Abfolute Certainty of your having the whole Scripture that was writ, or, that it contains all Divine Revelations; or, that you have the right Copy, to every material particle in it, that may figuify Faith, that is, indeed, right Scripture, &c. (or the right Purfe, &c. But, I am more concern'd for fome plaufible Infinuations in this Similitude, which may hazard to corrupt the Reader's Judgment. For, however, you decline and avoid it, yet the generality of Readers, whenever they hear any speech of

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the Certainty of the Grounds of their Faith, they immediately apprehend they are to be Certain of the particular Points of their Faith by vertue of those Grounds And, 'tis a common Errour in many, of an indifferent good Judgment, (I wish it did not sway with some who pass for great Schollars) that, when a thing easily finks into their Apprehension, they are apt to conceit it to be a Truth. When, therefore they hear of a Purse, which is a thing very easy to open, (it being no more but pulling two ftrings which use to run very glib:) and, that Scripture is in many regards, here comparid to a Purfe; they are presently inclin'd to fancy, that, Scripture's sense is as easy to be come at, as 'tis to take money out of a Purse: 'Tis but plucking those easily following strings, and the deed is done. But, alas! Here lies all the difficulty. The Arians, Novatians, Socinians, &c. have all of them this Purle, yet are never the richer; but, for want of skill to open it, and get the Gold and Silver thence, they go away empty, or worfe. Now, certainly, those high points, viz. A Trinity, Christ's Divinity; the Real Presence, &c. Should deferve to be reckon'd amongst the Golden Ones; and, therefore, should be as most valuable, so most easily attainable; being of the highest import for the Church, or the Body of Christianity. Yet, 'tis granted the Socini-ans Err in the two first of those Points, for all their acuteness and wit. I except next against the resembling the Contents of it to Gold and Silver; which certainly enrich those who are Possessours of such a Purse: whereas, those Sects lay claim to that Purse too with equal Title, yet, coming to open it by their Interpretation, they take the Drofs of Errour for the pure Gold of Truth, and Soul-poyfoning Herefies for means of Salvation. Had I a mind to fet up a similitude-mender, and, that you will needs

needs have it a Purse, I should beg your leave to put it thus: Suppose that Purse's Mouth were tyed up with a knot of such a mysterious contrivance, that none could open it (I mean still, as to the understanding the Mysteries of our Faith) but those who knew the Mind of the Bequeather; and, that the Church, to which it was left as a Legacy, had knowledge of his Mind, and so could open it; while others tortur'd their Wits with little tricks and inventions, turning and winding the ambiguous folds of it, some one way, some another; and yet entangled their own thoughts, more another, while they went about to unty the Knots that so perplex't them.

22. This is the true case. You make account containing does all the business; whereas, 'tis nothing at all to our purpose, which is (in the final Intention of it) about the Absolute Certainty of your Faith; unless we have equal assurance that you can get out thence what's contain'd there, as you pretend to have, that 'tis contain'd. Now, it cannot be deny'd, but the Primitive Church was imbu'd with Christ's sense by the Preaching of the Apostles and their immediate Successours; and so had a sure and proper Way to interpret Scripture; and, while this sense was still deliver'd down, they could not fail of an absolutely Certain Rule to understand it right.

But, there steps up now one Heretick, then another, opposing himself to the sense of the Church; and, relying on the dextery of his own wit, will needs find out contrivances how to open the Scripture's Meaning by wayes of his private Skill: But falls into multitudes of Errours, finding no way to unfold the deeply-my-sterious Book; having refus'd to make use of the right means, viz. Christ's sense descending in the Church by Tradition. Whence, notwithstanding all his little Arts

and bootting prefumption like the Fox in the Fable,

Vas lambit, Pultem non attingit.

23. Mistake me not : I do not mean Scriptures Letter is not clear in fuch passages as concern Common Morality, or the Ten Commandments; with the Sense of which every one is imbu'd by the Light of Nature. Nor in matters of Fact, fuch as were most of those Marks or Signs to know the Melfias by, foretold us the Prophets: our Saviour's doing fuch and fuch Miracles, his goin beyond for dan, org. Nor in Parables explain'd by him and fuch like. But, in Dogmatical Points or Tenets, which are Spiritual, and oftentimes profound Mysteries, (and, of these, by the way, I defire still to be understood, when I speak of the Certainty of the Letter or Sense of Scripture, for with other Passages I meddle not) as the Tenet of a Trinity, Christ's God-head, the Real Presence of his Body in the Sacrament; and such like; which have a vast Influence upon Christian Life either immediately, or elfe in a higher Nature, being (as it were) Principles to many other Articles of Faith which depend on their Truth: One would verily think. I fay, that fuch as these should be some of your Golden Points, or else there were none at all contain'd in your Purfe: Yet, we experience, That even in fuch as thefe. your Rule is not intelligible enough to keep the Followers of it from erring. So that, let your Purse have never so Golden and Silver a lining, you are never the richer, unless you can come at it, or can certainly distinguish the pure Gold of Truth from the impure Drofs of Errour. Your Similitude then comes not home to your purpose, nor shews that you have therefore all your Faith, or all Divine Revelations, because you have a Book which you judge contains them. Let's fee now if it does not make against you. You put the Doctrin (or Points)

Points) of Faith to be the Gold and Silver contain din the Purfe; and, confequently that must be the Purfe into which that Doctrin of Faith was put by Christ our Saviour; and this was evidently the Heads, and Hearts of the Faithful. For the Points of Faith, being to many Divine Truths, are onely contain'd in Men's Minds properly; and, Words being, by their very Definition, but Signes of what is in our Minds. Truths are no more really in a Book, than Wine is really in a Bulb which fignifies it. Since then those Truths were onely in the Breast of Christ Originally, and, after him, in that of the Apostles; and their Thoughts could not be communicated, nor confequently the Gold and Silver deliver'd to the Legatees, otherwife than by fignifying it, which can onely be done by one of these ways, by Living Voice and Practice, or by Writing; that is by Tradition or Scripture, neither of these can with any Sense be liken'd to the Purse it felf, into which the money is to be put, or answer comparatively to It; but they are both of them Wayes, Means or Methods of putting these heavenly Riches into it's Proper Purfe, the Souls of the Faithful. Of these two Ways our Saviour chose the First; which was Teaching his Doctrin orally, for he writ nothing: and by doing thus, told us it was the better: For, it had been against his Infinit Wisdom to chuse the worser way for Himself to make use of, and leave the better to his Servants. Nor, did his fervants, the Apostles, affect the Way of Writing, fo as to use it onely; but, on the contrary, they made use of this Oral Way of Preaching constantly, and that of Writing (for the most part at least, if not altogether) occasionally. They converted the prefent Church by their Preaching; they comforted the future Church by leaving many most edifying Words, and actions.

Actions of our Bleffed Saviour, Written; which being Particulars, and not breaking out openly into Christian Practice, might otherwise in likelihood, (at least to a great degree) have been lost to succeeding generations; besides the abetment their Writings give to Faith it self. when certainly interpreted, and rightly understood. So that, according to this discourse of yours we should either have never a Purse to put Points of Faith in, for you take no notice of the Souls of the Faithful into which they are properly put, and in which onely they are in reality contain'd: Or, if you will needs call that a Purse which contains them meerly as a Sign does the thing fignify'd, or as that which may fignify to us our Faith, you must put two Purses: Tradition and Scripture: And then the onely Question is, out of which Purse, we can with more Certainty get it. That is, whether a Living Container, which can give us perfect light of it's Sense by *all the best ways imaginable; or the Dead Letsea. 2. & 3. ter, which, as Experience demonstrates, can neither clear it's Sense to Private Understandings; nor, if we doubt of it's Meaning, and had a mind to ask it, could either hear or reply, much less pertinently, and appositely speak to the Asker as oft as he had occasion to press still for fatisfaction. Again, the Written Instrument or Means of putting this heaven-stampt coyn in our Souls. is an Ignoble Instrument in comparison; being in reality, as to it's Material part, or taken as abitracted from the Sacred Sense which is fignify'd by it, nothing but lak thus figur'd on Paper. Whereas, the material part of the other is the most Noble that can be found under Heaven it felf: viz. the Church which all Christians must acknowledge to be the Spouse of Christ, the Pillar and Ground of Truth, and contilling of the Living Temples of the Holy Ghost; That, for whose edificati-

*See above,

on the Scripture was writ; and, fo, holds proportion with it as the Means does with the End, which is in a manner Infinit. Nay, That, for which all the Material World was created, and the Oeconomy of it still carry'd on, from the first beginning of Time to it's last Period. Lastly, That for whose take God himself was made Man, and dy'd a most cruel Death on a Cross. So that 'tis unconceivable, that it can enter into the thoughts of any intelligent man who believes this to be the due Character of the Church, there should be any competition betwixt the Letter of Scripture and it; or that it can possibly be doubted to which of them (all things consider'd) we ought to attribute most in looking after Faith. But, to return to your fimilitude. The fum of it is this: That the Gold and Silver you speak of, being the Doctrin of Faith; not the Scripture, but the Heads, and Hearts of the Faithful, (that is, of the Church) does really and indeed contain it; and, confequently, this onely can with any propriety be compar'd to a Purse. That, both Tradition and Scripture are to be liken'd to the feveral Ways of putting the Heavenly Treasure of Faith, into this Purse, or Faith into the Souls of the Faithful. Lastly, that taking them as containing them, as fignes do the things fignify'd, it is not their containing this Treasure does us any good, but the delivering it out to us; no more than a man is better for having a Trunk full of Money fo circumstanc't that he could never come at it : and, that, between these two ways of coming at this Treasure, or their delivering it out to us there is no comparison, whether we regard the Intelligibleness, or Providential Establishment of those respective Instruments in order to such an End. So that your similitude, how prettily soever it look't at first, hath one misfortune very common to fuch fine useless

toys, that is, to be good for nothing; for it neither comes up to the Question, nor sures with your own Tener.

24. But ere we part from this Point, it were not amils to examin a little that cautious expression of yours [all things necessary for falvation] into which you change that bold affertion that you are absolutely certain you now hold all the same Doctrin that was taught by Christ and his Apostles. I ask you then what do you mean by those words [necessary for Salvation] which mince the matter so warily? Do you think Christ taught any unnecessary Points, or did a need, less action! Sure you will not say it. And yet my felf will grant too, and agree with you that fewer Meansthan the Knowledge of all Christ taught, may suffice for the Salvation of some particular persons. What follows then, but, that, fince they are all necessary for some body, and yet not all necessary for every particular person, more of them are necessary for one man. than for another, and all of them necessary for the body of the Church: whose Pastours are to instruct their Children in them; and apply the Efficacy of them to their Souls, as their capacities admit, and exigencies require. For, tho' fome few may be faved without the knowledge of fuch & fuch Points, (flender Motives being enough for their circumstances,) yet multitudes of others may require incomparably more effectual Means, to buoy them up from the World, and raise them to heaven; and so, they would certainly miscarry for want of them. Particularly, the points now mention'd, are of such a high a general Influence, that, without thefe, the Devotion of a very great portion of the Church, would be enfeebled, many of the Souls that want them be loft eternally, and others be but dim Stars in the Glorious Firmament of Heaven, in comparison of what they might . might have been, had their Minds been cultivated with such elevating considerations. And, can the Church, which God has entrusted with those Souls, think that 'tis agreeable to his Will, his Flock should either dy, or fall short of the full growth they might have had in the plentiful Pastorage he had provided for them? It rests then for you, either to shew those Points not necessary for the Generality, and that your Grounds are sufficient to give men, both as able and as willing (for ought appears) to understand Scripture right as your self is, Absolute Certainty of Them (which is to consute Experience, and dispute against your own Knowledge,) or else to consess ingenuously you have no Absolute Certainty of even the highest Fundamentals, and most necessary Points for the Salvation of Mankind.

25. Thus much to shew that your Rule gives you no Absolute Certainty of all such matters as are necessary for your Salvation, with reference to the Points of Faith; to certify which, Experience assures us it does not reach. Now, should we speak of the affent of Faith, the Short Difcourse, p. 30,31. of my former Letter, demonstrates clearly you can have no Absolute Certainty of any one, and so cannot with reason affirm your Faith is True; fince, wanting Absolute Certainty that Christ taught it, it may be Falfe. The fame point has been prest upon you in Faith vindicated, Reason against Raillery, Errour non-plust, and diverse other Books: yet tho' it was the most important objection that is or can be imagin'd, as plucking up by the roots all your Faith, and destroying it from it's very Foundation; no return could ever yet be obtain'd. nor candid Reason product, but onely a put-off with Sufficient Certainty, and fuch dow-bak't words; without being able or even endeavouring, to shew that Grounds less than Absolutely Certain can possibly be thus sufficient

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for the Nature, the Ends and Wes of Faith, But 'tis

high time to return to our Disputants

P. 18.

26 Against this pretended Answer of yours, you introduce Mr. M. Juggesting Jeveral things. First, As to difference of Translations. To which you reply. Doth. Mr. M. think our Faith is to be refolv'd into the Original Texts? What he thinks you know better than you would feem to do. He cannot but think, if he may believe you, that you refolve your Faith into the Lerter of Scripture. He cannot but think that by these words you mean the Right Letter; for, otherwise, it. would not be Scripture: Nor can he think, or you either, it can be the Right Letter, unless it have a Right Translation, and this, from a True Copy; nor that any Copy can be True, unless conformable to the True Original. And, if there can be any failure in any of thefe, nay, if you have not Absolute Certainty of all these you cannot have (by your Grounds) any Abfolute Certainty of your Faith, For, if the Letter be wrong, all is wrong that is built on it: and it may be wrong. for ought you know, notwithstanding the Testimony of all Christian Churches relying on this Way of attesting the Truth of the Letter. For, you can never hew that all those Churches consented to apply their utmost diligence to examine and attest all the feveral Translations, made in their respective languages; or witnest that they came from the true Original; or took the most exquisit care that was possible to see that the Translaters and the Copiers did their duty. Which, had they held the Letter to be their onely Rule of Faith, and confequently, that All Faith, that is, the very Being of the present and future Chunch, and their own Salvation too, depended on the Scripture, they were obliged in conscience, and under the highest Sin, above all things in the

the World, to have done; and this, with the exacteft care imaginable : Tour Grounds then notwithstanding all you have faid or alledged hitherto to enfure the Letter, make no Provision for the Absolute Certainty of the Written Rule, nor confequently of your Faith, 01 29 But what becomes then (fay you) of the Kulgar Lathe Translation? Tanswer, in our Grounds no harm at all : For the Canon of the Books comes down by the Testimony of all Christian Churches that are truly Christian : and the Doctrin of Christy transfus'd into the hearts of the fliceeding Faithful ever fince the beginning, both taught them bow, and obligid them to correct the Copy in those particular Texts that concern'd Faith, if any Errour through the carelefness, unattentiveness or malice of the Translaters or Transcribers at any time had crept in. By the same Means as you can now adays correct the Copy in those Texts, that ought to express some Point of Morality; in case it were corrupted. and deviated from Christian Manners; viz. by vertue of the Sense of that Practical Tenet you were imbu'd with formerly; & this, even tho you had no other Copy or Text to amend it by: Infomuch that how good an opinion to ever you had of the Copy, Translater, Printer or Correcter of the Press; yet, for all that, you would conclude they had err'd, and the Letter was faulty, rather than forgo the Dodrin fo firmly rivetted in your heart by the confirme Teaching and Practice of the Chriflian world. As for other particular Texts of an Inferiour Concern, they could be best corrected by multitudes of other ancient Copies (the Churches Care still going along) in which too the greatest care that was possible to rectify it's fireouts was taken by the Council of Treat, that to it might be as exact as Human Diligence could well render it. A thing, as far as my memo-G 2 TY

Ibid.

ry reaches, never order'd or very much regarded by a-

my Council formerly, about 7 mor : older

28. But I forefee, your method of confuting (which is to muster up Extrinsecall objections not at all to the purpose) will naturally lead you to discredit this way of correcting Scripture's Letter in passages belonging to Faith, as fingular or New; This being the fame your Friend G. B. objected to the Way of Tradition it felf; as may be feen above, Sect. 10. Such piddling Exceptions, dreft up prettily in gay language, go a great way, and make a fine thew in your Concroverties; and, which is a benefit of most advantage to you, excuse you from bringing any Intrinsecal Arguments; tho these onely are fuch as conclude any thing, and tho you are bound by your precise Duty to produce such .: Wherefore, to ward this blow, I shall alledge the Judgment of that Learned, and Excellent Personage, Sir Thomas More, our first Modern English Controvertist; who, writing, not as gainst you in defence of our Grounds, but to another Catholick Divine, expresses candidly his Sentiment in thefe words. Ego certe bac persuadeo mihi; idq; (ut opinor) vere quicquid ad fidem aftruendam faciat, non effe a quovis melius persum quam ab ipsis Apostolis perscriptum. Ideoque fit ut, quoties in Latinis codicibus occurrat quidquam quod aut contra Fidem aut mores facere videatur : Scripturarum interpretes aut ex aliis alibi verbis quid illud fibe velit dubium expiscentur; aut ad bibenti Changelium fibel, quod per universam Ecclefiam in cozoa Fidelium infusum eft; quod etiam, prinsquam feriberetur a quoquam, Apostolis a Christo, ab Apostolis Universo Mundo prædicatum est, dubios ejusmodi sermones applicant, acque ad inderiblem peritatis Requtam examinent: ad quam fi non fatis adaptare queant, aut lefe non intelligure, aut mendofum effe codicem, non du bitent

Fpiffead Martinum Dorpi-

bitent; This is my Judgment, and (as I conceive) a True one; that whatever (Text) is useful to build Faith on, was not better translated by any than it was writ by the Apostles themselves. And therefore, as oft as any thing vecurs in the Latin Books, that feems to make against Faith or Good Manners, the Interpreters of Scripture, either gathen from other Words in other places what that doubt should mean; or they compare those doubtful sayings to the living Sofpel of Faith, which was infus'd into the bearts of the Faithful, throughout the Universal Church; & which, before any man writ it, was Preach't by Christ to the Apostles. and by the Apostles to the whole World; & examine them by the inflerible Bule of faith; with which it they cannot make it square, they conclude, that either they do not understand it, or the Book is faulty] where he passes by the former way with a fleight word [expiscentur] fish out the fense; but infifts on the latter way of preserving the Copy fincere, as Certain and Proper.

29. I must not pretermit your Objection p. 19, that the Ancient Christian Church never knew any thing concerning this Method of resolving Faith into meer Oral Tradition. I would defire you to add [Practical] to Oral; at least to conceive it to be understood all the way, that being our True and constantly-avow'd Tenet. But, did the Antient Church, in reality, never know any thing of this way? Tis wonderful you should not understand they meant the same as we do, unless they speak the self-same Words, and make the same Discourses we do now. Did not they all hold, that who taught any thing contrary to the Doctrin delivered down by the Church, was a Heretick ? Did any of them fay that the Churche's Tradition of a Doctrin, as Christs, was liable to Errour? Did any of them hold that it was lawful for your Sober Enquirer to rely on his Private Interpretation of the Scri-

pture, and relinquish the fenfe of the Church, which the true Point? Not one. 'Tis one thing to fay they of quoted Scripture against Hereticks, who had rejected the Authority of the Church, (even the Council of Trees does for) another, to fay they had no firmer Ground for their Faith, but their own private Judgments of it fenfe. Tis one thing to give it high Commendations for it's Excellency, Divine Doctrin, Usefulness and Suffici ency for the Ends for which it was Ordained by God Tis another, to fay that, in those places which relate to Spiritual Points and high Mysteries of our Fairly, it's fo clear, that, private Fancies can with Absolute Certainty fix upon it's true fense, and, on that, Ground their Faith. Tis one thing to fay fornetimes, 'tis Plain and Evident, when they are Arguing against Hereticks: this is a thing not unufual even among us, when we are disputing, and have an opinion that what we alledge is manifest: and those Fathers or Councils which insisted on it, had good reason to have that opinion of what they alledg'd, having the Doctrin of Faith, (Scripture's best interpreter) in their hearts: Besides, when there is full affurance of it's fense, who doubts but it is of a vast Authority too; being in that case the same as if the Apostle or Christ himself were there, and spoke his Mind in the Point under debate. Whence they confilted Hereticks with defining from Scripture; upon the affirance that they had the true fense of it another Way. than the Heretick had by his private Interpretations. But, 'tis another thing to fay, that, as manag'd by Private Judgments, working on the bare Letter, or relying on Fallible Interpreters, it is fo unavoidably convictive. beyond all possibility of giving it another plausible fense, that all Mankind mult think him a Renouncer of the clear Light of Reafon, or Stark blind with Passion

and Interest, and abhorr him as such, who shall interpret it after another manner. And fuch the Rule of Faith must be, otherwise, none could with Conscience think or fay any Heretick is obstinate, nor any man (no not the Church it felf I condemn him, much less abborr him for being fuch, as was ever her Custome. All the former Perfections we as heartily, fully, and constantly afcribe to Scripture as any Protestant in the world: nay, we say moreover, that this want of Clearness which unqualifies it for being a Rule, springs from a very high perfection in it : viz. It's deep Senfe; onely this one, of giving every particular man, who by his private Judg. ment Interprets it, fuch affurance of its fense as is competent to Ground his Faith on, we cannot grant; this being no less contrary to common Reason, than 'tis even to Experience alfo. To return then to your Objection. You fee Sed. 10. that the Antient Fathers were not fuch Strangers to this Method of Tradition we follow and explicate. And, you might have observ'd many others both nam'd and cited, Surefooting p. 131. to 137. What matters it that they did not express That our Tenet, or Dilate upon it in such Terms as we do now; so they taught others to hold to what was deliver'd, and not to rely on their own private Interpretations of Scripture against the present Churches Doctrin? Since in doing this, they held the fubflance of that which we have fince more diffusely explain'd, and reduc't our Discourses to more Methodical and Formal Refolutions of Faith, which were not fo much in fashion in former Ages. Befides, you are not to be told we both have & could alledge Fathers enow for our Tenet, and the Obligation to hold to the Doctrin deliver'd from Fathers, that is to Tradition: and how fmartly and unanswerably they prest it against Hereticks, as a certain Determiner of the Controversies

troversies between the Catholicks and Them. On the other side, how often they complain dof the Uncertainty of the Scripture interpreted by private Men, as Grounding all Hereses; by reason of the mysterious Obscurity of the Letter, and its liableness to be missinterpreted and misunderstood? Whereas, it was never heard that the Rule of Tradition taken in the sense, in which we hold it (viz. for a Delivery of a Practical Doctrin, publickly preach't to great multitudes at first, practifed by them, and held, and recommended as Divine, and the way to Salvation) did ever give rise to any Heresy, and impossible it should. Which one Research to a Considerate Man, is sufficient to conclude the whole present Controversy about the Rule of Faith.

70. From the Qualities requisit to make Scripture's Letter a Rule of your Faith, we come to confider the Quantity it ought to have, or the Number of Books: which you tell us p. 19. Mr. M. fuggefied. In order to which, I have onely two things to ask you. II. Whe ther, as I faid formerly, you have any unanimous Confent of the Christian Church, that there was never a Book lost that was writ by some who were Divinely inspir'd: and, confequently, did contain some Divine Revelation ons? Or, if you cannot prove but there was, how do you know but those Divine Revelations, which that Book or Books contain'd, were not different from, or to be superadded to those, contain'd in the Canon we have now? If you cannot prove these two Points, then 'tis manifest you cannot prove with Absolute Certainty. that the Books Wee have now, contain'd all the Divine Revelations. 2. You insist onely on this Universal Testimony for the Canonical Books of the New Testament; but, I would know whether this Testimony reaches to each

each Chapter and every Verse of those Chapters, nav, each material Word in those Verses ? If it does not, as you neither fay, nor with any Reason can fay (for 'tis hard to prove the former, & impossible to prove the later but by our Rule) then you are as far from your Faith as ever; unless you bring some other Testimony that is Absolutely Certain, to assure you that such and such a Verse, which you would quote and rely on for such and fuch a Point of Faith, nay, the main and most fignificant Word in that Verse is true Scripture: which, I am fure you cannot: For, what Testimony else can be invented to do this, if the other, which was of the whole Christian Church, cannot reach it? Is there any possible way to ascertain this, but by our Doctrin-Rule? Upon this occasion, pray inform me with what reason you could reflect fo severely pag. 15. on the Church of Rome; for not receiving the Epiftle to the Hebrews in St. Hierom's Time, affoon as other Churches; and, not on the Greek Churches, (which you use to prefer before the Latin) who, in the same Father's time, refus'd to admit the Apocalypse? The accepting or not accepting fuch Books, even according to your own Doctrin, depended on their being fatisfied of the Evidence produced for their Apostolical Authority; and so was an Act of Prudence, antecedent to the Judgment or Determination of any Church, whether Greek or Latin. But, fo unreasonable is your pique against the Church of Rome. that the cannot act prudently without forfeiting her Infallibility. Tho, another man would have acknowledg'd, it was rather a very commendable cautiousness in the Latin & Greek Church too, not to admit into fuch a facred Roll, Books that were not yet clearly prov'd to be authentickly such; than a blameable Lapfe, or fo hainous a Crime that for committing it, the must needs lo'e midz

lofe all her Title to Christ's promis'd Affafance.

31. This gives me occasion to ask you what becomes of Your Rule, and, confequently, of Your Faith all that while ? If the Letter of the Canonical Books, that is, of the whole Canon of the New Testament be your Rule, and those Books were part of this Canon, they must necessarily be part of your Rule too; whence it follows that your Rule was not Intire, but deficient for fome hundreds of years, till the whole Canon was Collected and Acknowledg'd. I fee you do but complement with the Primitive Church of the first 300 years; and, that you onely cry it up to avoid the unkindness, which the fucceeding Ages thew to your Caufe; for, by your Doctrine, you cannot but hold that the Ages which follow'd in, are to be prefer'd: Since These had your intire Rule, the Others wanted some parts of it; and sometimes held but three parts of it, half of it, or less, (and so, by your Principles, were but three quarters or half Christians) according as the feveral pieces came by degrees to be acknowledg'd, and univerfally accepted. I doubt Mr. M's Discourse about the Number of Books, more perplexes you, than your are willing to make thew of. For, pray, how many of these Books go to make up your Rule of Faith? If any one, or fome few, then you should not have stood upon the Canon we have now; that is, all the Apostolical Books, or Scripture in general. If all the Canonical Writings be your Rule, then perhaps the Primitive Christians had but half their Faith, or lefs! it may be wone at all, because, wanting yet those other Books, they wanted necessary places to compare those Texts with they already had; which is a great part of your Method to find out your Faith in Scripture. Pray, fatisfy us about this exact Number of Books, and how many will just serve the turn; and, make some thing

thing cohere; for, I cannot for my heart as yet find any thing that does. You talk to us of a Purfe, and fay it must be full; but, when we come to look at it more narrowly, it appears to have been for fome time but half a Purfe, and wanted one fide of it, at least had a great Hole in it: fo that you put us into an apprehension, that many of the Gold and Silver Points might have dropt out of it in the time of the Primitive Church; by which Church notwithstanding, and no other, in our disputes about Faith, you feem heartily willing to be judg'd. But. let us examin a little the Confent of all (your) Christian Dr. Se's first Churches for Scripture, you make fuch brags of. In the Letter. p. 7. first place marches and leads the Van, your Christian Church of the Noble Arch Heretick Marciou; who blotted out of the Canon the Epistle to the " Hebrews, "that (a) Epiphan. to Titus, and both those to Timothy; who admitted one- har. 24. n. 9. ly St. Luke's Gospel to be Divine, and brejected all the (b) Iren. lib.3. Epistles of St. Paul, as an Apostate from the Law. In the next rank, go abreast those three Famous Christian Churches of Ebion, Valentinus, and Cerinthus: Of which (c) the First admitted onely St. Matthews Gospel; the (c) Iren. lib. (d) fecond, onely St. John's; and the third, onely St. (d) Iren. lib.2. Mark's. After them, come others, mentioned by St. cap. 26. Hierom and Epiphanius, who in a manner brought all Hier. ad Panl into doubt : especially if Faith depended in those days at Eustoch in on the comparing of places; for, they held that diverse Prcem. Ep. ad things both in the Old Testament and the New, were Philom. Epip. not inspir'd by GOD, but writ by a Human spirit. need not acquaint you, that Luther, Brentius & Chemnitius, did revive the old Doubts about the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Apocalypse, of later dayes. Nor need it be recounted how many Orthodox Christian Churches did not accept diverse Books formerly. And, tho' afterwards, as you say well, they came by degrees to fix on the H 2

P. 15.

the Certain Canon of the New Testament, yet I am apt to judge that this was not perform'd by Immediate Testimony: For, the Witnesses were long ago dead, and their Grand-Fathers too, who could attest that such a Book was indeed, to their knowledge, written by fuch an Apofile or Evangelist. It descended then by Oral Tradition in those respective Churches. Whence, as that Tradition was not fo Practical, fo it was restrain'd to some few in each Church, and was withal, very narrow at first in comparison of our Tradition for Christ's Doctrin: which was, in a manner, univerfally and publickly preach't and practis'd. Now the strength of a Tradition, and the largeness of it are to be taken from the largeness of the first Attestation; and all that after-Ages can do, when they attest such things, is to witness that they received it from some others; but so, that the Tradition was still narrower as it came nearer the fountain; which very much weakens it. By what other Lights the Church guided her felf in her accepting such and such Books for Canonical Scripture, belongs to another place. Your Tradition then was not Universal for Scripture in the first 300 years, and its Original Attestation was weak in comparison of that which was for Doctrin.

P. 20.

32. I have little to fay to your Explicit or Implicit Points contain'd in Scripture: For, I fee they are both equally to no purpose, while but contain'd there, till you bring us a Rule to interpret the Letter with Absolute Certainty. If any ought to be explicitely there, none can have so good a Title to it as those high and most Fundamental Articles spoken of so often; yet we see there are no places producible for them, but may have other senses given them; and bear (as experience shews us) not yet ended, and, for ought we know, endless Dis-

putes

putes among your fober Enquirers attending to your Rule. Onely I a little wonder you should fay 'tis sufficient for your purpose, that all Doctrin of Faith necessary to Salvation are contain'd in (the Letter of) Scripture, either explicitly or implicitly. If they be necessary to Salvarion, they mult be necessary to be believ'd or known to be there; for they must fave men by believing them, and acting according to that Belief, or no way; and, if they be onely implicitly there, they are as yet unknown, or not believ'd: So that, according to you, that is a Point necessary to Salvation, which does not at all conduce to it. But, I wonder more at the happiness of your Sober Enquirer to whom, you affirm and stand to it stoutly, those Implicit Points will become Explicit without the help of the Church; and yet you call it assuming, in the Church of Rome, to do the same, or declare the Sense of fuch Articles. Certainly, this Sober Enquirer is your special Darling, and Favourit. He, tho' a private person, can discover those Explicit Points; and I suppose may declare them too, to as many as he pleases; for how can he in Charity doles? But alas! The filly infignificant Church, can do nothing at all; the must submit to the wondrous Gifts, you have bestow'd upon the Rabble, and her Governors and Pastors be accounted Tyrants if they shall dare to encroach upon their high Prerogatives, or prefume to share in their Priviledges of being able to unfold or know the Explicit Meaning of Scripture - Texts: For, in case they can know this, and this Knowledge be good for the Faithful (as it is, being as you fay neverflary to Salvation) 'tis without question they may declare them, or make them known to others : nay, and use their Authority too (if you will youch!afe to allow them any) to edify the Faithful by making this Knowledge fink into them. Nor can it prejudice their Reason, that the

Ibid.

Ibid.

the Church obliges them to believe them; for this is no more than obliging them to act according to Reason: which tells them that, fince they must either trust themfelves or their Pastours in such things, and the Pastours' must be incomparably better quality'd than themselves are, for the discovering of such mysterious Truths, and withall appointed by God to teach them; 'tis far more Rational to fubmit to their Judgments in fuch things, than to we their own. But, indeed, you have reason to stand up for your Sober Enquirer; for all Ring-leaders of any Herefy, or Faction against the Church, took this very Method in their proceedings. The Spirit of Pride which possest them, principled them with these Rational and Peaceable Maxims, that they had Authority to judge their Judges, reach their Teachers, direct their Guides, and that their own Wit excell'd that of all the World before them. But, when a Faction was form'd into a good lufty Body, the Scripture-Rule was laid afide again; fo that 'tis doubtful whether we have had ever a Sober Enquirer fince, as was shewn in my First Letter Sect. 25.

33. You desire to see this Power of the Church in Scripture in Express Terms; and we tell you we need not let you see it in Scripture at all: for Tradition, & even Common Sense, tells us, that the Church has Power to feed, and instruct her Flock; and enlighten them in what she knows, and they are ignorant of. If you demand how the Roman Church came by this knowledge of making Implicit Points Explicit? I answer, by Tradition, giving her the Sense of Christ's whole Law, and each Intire point of it; and by the Light of Nature purity'd by supernatural knowledges antecedently; as also by her Application, when occasion required, to resect upon, and penetrate deeply into that

sense; which enables her to explicate her own thoughts for the Points of Faith) more clearly now; which she had indeed before, but did not so distinctly look into them. or fet her felf to explain them. But pray, what express Scripture has your Sober Enquirer for his Power to make the Implicit Points Explicit? You reckon up diverse agreeablenesses p. 21. why this should be; but not one word of express Scripture do you pretend to for it. And if himself pretend to any such Power, besides that it will look a little odd that God should take more care of private men than of his Church, let him either shew us he has better means Natural or Supernatural to do this, than the Church has, or he discovers his Pride and Folly both to pretend to it. You fay p. 21. that the Church of Rome has no where declar'd in Council it has amy fuch Power; viz. to declare explicitly Points imply'd in Scripture. But, First, you may please to know It has made such a declaration Sect. 4. where it defines that it belongs to the Church, judicare de vero sensu et interpretatione Scripturarum, to judge of the true fenfe. and Interpretation of Scripture; Next, It, accordingly, proceeds upon this Power, as I shall manifest by three feveral Inflances. One Sess. 13. cap. 4. where it explains those Texts, Luc. 22. 70. 6. and 2 Cor. 11. to be meant of being truly Christ's Body; and declares thence that the Church was ever perswaded of the Doctrin of Transubstantiation. Another, Sess. 14. cap. 7. Where it declares the Text, I Cor. I. Let a man examin himself. &c. to be understood by the Custome (or Practice) of the Church, of, Sacramental Confession, necessary to be us'd before receiving the Sacrament by all those who are conscious to themselves of mortal fin. The Third. Seff. 14. cap. 1. where it interprets that Text of S. James cap, 5, to be by Apostolical Tradition understood of the . the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. Which places you do not judge so much as implicitly to contain that Senfe, but hold that they contain another things How the Churches declaring explicitly Points defcending by Tradition, makes no new Articles of Faith. is discours't above, Sed. 4, 5, 6, 7. By which, you may fee that Mr. G. and Mr. M. whom (pag. 22) you will needs fet at variance, are, notwithstanding, very good Friends. For, if the Church knew the the fenle which is contain'd in that place, before; the Doctrin is Old, the' the declaring it to be fignifi'd by that particular Text, be perhaps New. I say perhaps; for, in fome fignal passages, much in use in the Churches Preaching, Catechisms and Practife; I doubt not but that, not only the particular Doctrin, but also that 'tis fignifi'd by fuch a Text, comes down by Tradition in the Ecclefia docens. Notwithstanding the agreeableness of these two Positions, you triumph mightily here p. 23. that, Thus Mr. M. has answer'd Mr. G's Demonstration. As much as to fay, I know not for my life what to fay to it my felf, and therefore, would gladly shift it off upon any Body, so I could handsomely rid my Hands of it. Thus, you make (for you can make any thing by your Method of mistaking every thing) the Council of Trent clash with the Church of Rome (a hard Task one would think!) by pretending to interpret Scripture according to the unanimons sense of the Fathers; which you judge contradicts the making known, and obliging Men to believe that explicitly now, which they were not oblig'd to by any precedent Sense or Explication. What mean the words [Men] and [They] If they fignify all men, and intend to lignify that no man knew those imply'd Points before. but all might hap to contradict them, you miltake our Tenet: for we judge it absolutely impossible that none

of the Fathers should reflect more attentively on the full fense of the Points deliver'd, or look into their own thoughts as Faithful; and, therefore, it was much more impossible they should unanimously contradict those Points. And, unless they did so, the Council of Trent, and the Church of Rome may, by the Grace of God, very well correspond in their Doctrin for all your mistake, For the Intention of the Fathers in that Decree (Seff. 4.) Was to reprefs the infolency of Hereticks wrefting the Scripture to their own private fentiments [contrary to the Sense of the Church, or the unanimous Consent of the Fathers.] And how this is directly contrary to this pow er of obliging to believe fomthing, as in Scripture, explicitly now, which was not fo known before, is unconceivable; unless you will prove that that Explicit Sense is directly contrary to the unanimous Consent of the Fathers or the Church, which you will never do. But, tis a trivial Exploit to make Mr. M. clash with Mr. G. or the Church of Rome with the Council of Trent; you can make that very Church clash with her self - Suis et ipsa Roma - and that openly and professedly too: Nay, which is most wonderful, fall out with her felf about her own Prerogatives, For. you tell us p. 23. that the it has affum'd this Power now spoken of, yet it still disown'd it. Now to assume a i Swer, is to challenge it; and to disown it, is to renounce it: which hang together much after the rate of all your Discourse hitherto. This Church of Rome is a most monstrous kind of Creature: It goes backwards, and forwards, blows and fups, declares for and against, and all at once: but we must imagin her to be such onely as the flands pourtray'd in Dr. St's Fancy.

34. Your main Stratagem to elude all this discourse, remains yet to be more fully detected, tho' it has been

p. 20.

occasionally toucht at diverse times formerly. Tis this that you are now upon the General Ground of Faith, and not the particular Acts of it, or the particular Certainty as to this or that Doctrine. And you feem to have reason for it too, because the main point in Dispute was, whether Protestants could shew any Ground of Absolute Certainty for their Faith. And this you think justifies you for hovering in the ayr, and onely talking of your Scripture-Rule in common, without lighting on or applying it to any one particular point contain d in that Rule. But this will avail you nothing. For, first ; Neither does our Discourse pinch upon any one particular Point, but upon the Uncertainty of your Faith in general, or on all your Points of Faith at once as built on your Ground. So that, tis the pretended Ground of your Faith we are difputing against all the while, and not any one particular Tenet We bring, indeed, Instances now and then of some particular Articles; but, tis to shew that, if your Ground has not power to ascertain absolutely those most Fundamental Points, it has power to ascertain none; and, fo, is no Ground of Faith at all Secondly, A pretended Ground cannot be known or acknowledged to be a real and firm Ground, till we fee it grounds famthing, It's Notion plainly imports a Relation to the Superstructure : and yournay as well prove a man a Father without proving he has a Child, as prove any thing to be a Ground without proving such and such Points to be grounded on it; and this (in our case) with Absolute Certainty. Pray, take that along with you still, otherwise you turn your back to the Question, and run away from it in the open Field. Tis tedious and mortifying beyond measure to hear you still talking, and pretending you have an Absolutely Certain Ground for Faith, and yet never see you,

you to much as once, endeavouring to flew how it's Ascertaining Virtue affects the Articles you build upon it: and that this particular Sense of Scripture in each respective Point has such a close, and necessary Connexion with the Letter on which 'tis built, as to give Absolute Certainty of it to all that are competent judges of the Sense of Words. Which the Experience of all Ages fince Christ confutes, and our own Eyes Witness to be falle in the Socinians and others. Thirdly, Your felf confest once upon a time that you are absolutely Certain you now hold all the fame Doctrin that was taught by Christ and his Apostles. Now this candid expression would make any honest well-meaning man verily believe that you meant you had been absolutely Certain of every particular Christian Doctrin, by vertue of your Ground or Rule. But your incomparable dexterity quite and clean over-reach't us. For, when you came to explain your felf there, it amounted to no more but that your Faith was refolv'd into Scripture (that is, that you pretended to Scripture) which contains all, or as you told us p. 17. that you were absolutely certain you hold all, because you hold all, not in your Soul or Mind (where Points of Faith are to be beld) but in a kind of Purfeas it were; as one is faid, when he holds a Book in his hand, to hold all that is in it; being possest of which, tho' you cannot come at it's fense (which is little better than if it were lock'r up in a Trunk) you are in possession of all Christian Faith notwithstanding, and hold very firmly (in that Sense) all that was taught by Christ and his Apofiles. Fourthly, Hence you have not perform'd what you undertook, viz. to thew that Protestants had any Absolutely Certain Ground of their Faith, For, 'tis not erough to paint out a Book, and cry out aloud Tis your Ground, but you must fbew, that 'tis indeed fuch a Ground. Now

P. 14.

Now a Ground or Rule bears in it's notion Evidence to those who after use it, and to know other things by it's Direction; Nay more, Clear Evidence For, as all Cen tainty must have some kind of Evidence to create it in us. fo this Effect of Absolute Certainty can have no less than Clear Evidence for it's Caufe. But, you may as eafily prove Mankind has no Eyes to fee with, as go about to shew that the Letter of Scripture is thus clear in order to the discovery of right Faith, even in the highest and most concerning Points of our Christian Belief. Fifthly, Tis pleafant to observe what a rare Refolution of your Paith you give us p. 24. Our Faith (fay you) is resolved into the Scripture as the Word of God, and whatever is built on the Word of God, is absolutely Certain. You must, indeed, having deferred the Tradition of the Church, either pretend to Scripture or nothing; unless you will confess your felves to be pure Phanancks or Pagans and it looks mighty playfibly to fay, that whatever is built on the Word of God is absolutely Certain infor tis a great Truth. But the only Point is still, Are you absolutely centain by your Grounds, that your faith is indeed built on the Word of God? You fay, indeed, Scripture is your Ground, you pretend to it as your Grand, perhaps you think it to too; and, 'tis not about your faying, pretending or think, ing it to be fuch, that we dispute with you; for we should not scruple to grant you all this without any Dispute avall: Burdoes your faying, pretending or thinks ing 1920be it to be foreally, and indeed & All Herefies in the world do as much as this comes to, and yet are no less Herefies than if they did none of this. Tis your 19 20 wing it to be your Ground (and that an Absolutely Cer-Pain one too) which we would be ato; but, we justly complain you flinch from the onely thing in Dispute

and perpetually balk us. We tell you once more, (and we cannot repeat it too often) there is a necessary Connexion between the Ground and the Building; for, 'tis not a Building if it have no Ground, nor the Ground of a Building if nothing be built on it. You are then to shew us Absolute Certainty of this necessary Connexion between the Scripture and your Faith, or you do nothing but talk at random. But, alas ! You have not the Confidence to make out this, or produce your Reasons to conelude this Ground and this Building have fuch a necesfary Relation; and I must tell you plainly, you can never do it. For, pray, tell me, May not the Socinians, and indeed all Hereticks that ever arose in the Church, fay, pretend, and (perhaps) think the same that you do? Nay, do not they all alledge the same? Do not they all profess to resolve their Faith (I mean their abominable Errours) into the written Word? Do not they pretend it for their Ground, and that they build their prophane Tenets on it; & laftly, avow as flourly as you do for your heart, that whatever is built on Gods Word, is absolutely Certain ? Will-you allow these Pleas Argumentative for them, or, that their wicked Errours are therefore true Faith and Absolutely Certain, because they alledge all this! And can you be fo unreasonable as to expect we should pass that for a good Argument, or a conclusive Reason to prove you have Absolute Certainty for your Faith, which your felf disallows, when tis alledg'd for them; nay, which you mult disallow and declare against, unless you will patronize all their Herefies? Pray, lay your hand on your Heart, and consider (I am sure, 'tis more your own Good, than mine, you should) into what a Lamentable, or rather Chimerical Condition God's Church is reduc't by your Resolution of your faith bere, and the Account you give of it. The Pillar and Ground of Truth eeo.ir

Truth, is reduc't by you into a confused Chaos of incoberent Errours ; Christ's immaculate Sponse is affociated with all the Adulterate Synagogues of Sathan, lastly, Faith as to it's Certainty is in no better a Condition than Herefy, and Herefy is upon even Ground with Faith. have a better opinion of the Church of England, than to believe Her most learned and genuin Members, will own fuch a Refolution of her Faith, as will make the Socinians, and all other Hereticks in the World their fellow-Christians and Brothers; as they must be forced to do, if they own no other Resolution of it than all those pestilent Sects unanimously profess. I see Mr. 6 had good reason to ask you in his 5th. Question, What Churches you accounted Christian Churches? For, I much fear, by your Discourse and Principles, you exclude None: Nor ought you, so they heartily hold the same Gound of Faith with you; for then all their Unchriftian Tenets are to pass for Material Errours, not Formal Herefies: They hold all true Faith in the Purfe still, tho' they mistake the coynand mettal; and that's enough, in all conscience, for such a Church as that you are about rearing or dawbing up. You pass a complement indeed upon the four first General Councils, and that you reied all fuch Doctrins as were condemn'd by them; which use to be words of course in your Controverses: as [your humble fervant] and fuch like, are in our common Conversation: but, when you are once got our of the circumstance of pretending to hold to some Antiquity, that fo you may fer a better face on it, when you oppose the Papists; when that job is over, they are but Falli. ble Congregations, and so perhaps were deceiv'd in all they defin'd against the Arians, Entychians, &c. Especially, if one of your fober Enquirers comes to fancy otherwife and, no doubt, there were many fuch even in thofe

those dayes. And, then comes the 21st. Article of O. Elizabeth's Symbol, and knocks them down all at once with a Deciaration that their Decrees have neither Strength nor Authority, unless it may be declar'd, that they be taken out of Holy Scripture; and so all is with a turn of ones hand brought back to the fame Point again. and, farewell Councils: Your felf, and any one of your fober Enquirers, are at full liberty still to judge of them by your Scripture-Rule; and the Resolution of your Faith is establish't by that Article (at least as you make use of it) to be the same with that which is made, and profest by all the vile Hereticks in the world. For, as Dr. Burnet fayes very candidly in his Answer to the Methed of converting Protestants, p. 83. and, no doubt upon your Principles, If any man, after his strictest Enquiries is still persivaded that a Council, has decreed against the true meaning of the Scriptures, in a point necessary to Salvation then he must prefer God to Man, and follow the Sounder tho it should prove to be the leffer party: And, if any Combany or Synod of Protestants have decree'd any thing contrary to this, in fo far they have departed from the Protestant Principles.] Where we see he gives every sober Enquirer leave to judge of Councils, even tho' General ones, for he excepts None; and himself thews them the way, by Judging & Censuring the Councils of his own Church.

35. Another scruple yet remains incumbent on you to clear; which is, that, by your putting it upon Mr. 6. to prove you have not Absolute Certainty as to the Rule of your Faith, and by your innate Antipathy against Infallibility, tis very dubious whether your self do indeed hold the Tradition of all Christian Churches Absolutely Certain, even for the Scripture; however to save your Credit, you then pretended it, searing your denying it might disedify Mr. T. Since then you ly under

a forewed fuspicion, that you do not deal really with him, and the reft of your Readers, in this fore't Profession; it would become you, in your Reply, both to thew pby you allow that Testimony to be Absolutely Certain, and yet are fuch an Enemy to Infallibility; fince common fense tells us, no man can judge himself Absolutely Certain of a thing, if he judges he may at the fame time be deceiv'd in it; and, withal, that you may give more fatisfaction to your Readers herein, than an empty and scarce credible acknowledgment of it, when you were in untoward Circumstances; pray, go to work like a Schollar, and demonstrate to us by way of folid Reason, working upon the Nature of the Thing (for no Argument meerly probable will fuffice to prove a Testimony Absolutely Certain) how, and by what vertue this Tradition of all Christian Churches comes to be thus Absolutely Certain for the Letter of the Scripture; as you. fee we endeavour to demonstrate the Absolute Cettainty of our Tradition for Doctrin, There cannot be a worthier Point to exert your felf in, nor a greater service done to your Rule: nor a better way to clear your felf to the incredulous part of the World, than to perform this: for one knows not whence meer Words, and outward Professions may proceed; but, folid and convincing Reasons can come onely from a Heart possest with the Truth of what is Profest. Go to work then, and bless us with the fight of this truly Learned and Judicious Performance, And, while your hand is in, please to thew us too, that, the Absolute Certainty of this Universal Testimony reaches to prove your Rule Intire; that is, reaches to prove no part of the Written Word was loft: may, that it reaches to the particular Verses, and the most substantial Words in those Verses, as well as to the main Books; and lattly, to Translations also and Tranfcrip-

foribtions as you ought to do in cafe they be (as indeed they are) of equal Concern, in our circumstances. as the Books themselves. Or, if you deny they are equally important; and, maintain that this Absolute Cerrainty may be had of your Rule, without the fame Certainty for thefe; then please to give us your Reasons for in and shew how Faith can be Absolutely Certain, tho' the Letter on which it depends, may perhaps have been main'd or corrupted by any of these miscarriages. Or. if you think fit to fay you have Absolute Certainty. of your Faith, tho' you have not Absolute Certainty for it's Rule; then, confess candidly and ingenuously your Faith is Absolutely - speaking Uncertain; and, to make good that rare Christian Tenet, fall to work and confute utterly that Politive Book [Faith Vindicated] which undertakes to produce a multitude of Demon-Arations to prove that Faith cannot possibly be falfe; and, withal, please to inform us to what end you maintain your Rule of Faith to be Absolutely Certain, if it do not make your Faith thus Certain too, or what that Certainty ferves for. Any thing would content us, fo you would once leave fluttering, and hovering in common Words: Either tell us plainly all Faith is Uncertain, or come at length to fome firm bottom, on which we may with Absolute Certainty ground the Truth of it, and raise it above some plausible Likelihood. But, we remonstrate against your purting us off with the Old Sham [Sufficient Gertainty Junless you particularize to us what kind of Certainty you hold, and make out 'tis sufficient for the Nature, the Ends and Uses of Faith, and the Obligations issuing from it, and incumbent on the Profesiours of it. If you refuse to condescend to these fair Proposals, all the World must think you onely temporiz'd with Mr. T. and the occasion; and that you have not that

Zeal for your Rule of Faith (whole grand Interest its these things should be made out) as you pretend. Once more I tell you, that, if all this will not move you to this every way necessary undertaking, I must then plainly challenge you, that it is your necessary and precise Duty, in this very circumstance, as you are a Controverist; and, as I am concern'd with you under that no

tion, I must demand it of you.

36. I know not well whether it be worth the while to justify Mr. M. for calling your Answer to Mr. G's sth. Question Trifling; or whether it be necessary, after fo ample a Discovery, that all the rest of them, taking them in the fense you explicated them, deserv'd no better Character. You were ask't onely the meaning of your Words, [Christian Church] but you had a mind to be liberal, and give more than was ask't, the meaning of [Univerfal Testimony] too : and to tell us, that, by V. niverfal Testimony, you mean Univerfal Confent. That is to fav. by Universal Testimony, you mean Universal Testimony : For, all agree or confent in the Testimony, if it be Univerfal. Then, to the precise Question, you Anfwer, that, by the Christian Church, you mean all Chri-Stian Churches: which is to fay, that, by the Christian Church, you mean the Christian Church; for All the Parts make the Whole; to that, instead of an Explication, you give us the same thing over again, and almost in the fame Words. And, pray, who's the wifer for fuch an Answer ? Yet, tho' it be impertinent, and nothing to the purpose, 'tis at least True, and Evident by its felf, without needing to make it a Question: If you would please to afford us such Evidences, when 'tis to purpole, you would highly oblige us. Certainly, a Confidering Reader cannot but think you are very unhappy in explicating your felf; for, either your Explications run quite

quite away from your Answer, which you are to explicate, and are a mile wide of them; or they come too close to them, and are the felf-fame faid over again, and almost in the same Words. But, can any one think fo excellent a Wit, as Yours, is justly reputed, should expose himself so manifestly, without some latent Design? Tis incredible: Let us take a view then of Mr. G's stb. Question; Being the Words Christian Church may be taken in several Latitudes by Persons of different Religions, I defire to know what that Christian Church is, &c. Here we fee plainly, that the main of the Question was, what Churches were accounted by You Christian, or how that Word [Christian] was to be explicated; and, You give him for explication the felf-fame word again, and in effect tell him, that by Christian is meant Chriflian; and thats all he can get from You. And, You did prudently for, had You come to diffinguish which Congregation was Christian, which not, You must have fecluded all Hereticks, which your Principles could not do; for your Ground of Faith here is most manifestly Common to all of them; and fo You would have lain open to the Difrepute of having and professing a Brotherhead with all those Excrementitions Our-casts; and your pretended Rule (notwithstanding its other many Divine Excellencies) had appear'd to be utterly unqualifi'd with Clearness and Firmness enough to be call'd a Rule or Ground. To avoid this, and in Confonancy to your Principles, You take all their Testimonies in for Scriprure and pretend it freingthens it. So it may perhaps as to the Books > But, You know how the Church complain'd of the Hereticks for corrupting the Letter of Scripture, to make it Favourable for them; and, therefore for any thing Ton know, they cry dup the Books, because they had fitted them for their own purpose. K 2 Whence, TOT

Whence, tho' the Testimony for the Books should be ffronger by their concurrence, yet the Credit of the Letter, in the respective places that oppose those Hereticks, is weaker for their allowing them, because they admitted them as confisent with their Tenets; otherwise, they would have rejected them, as they did others upon that fcore. And, what advantage can you gain by the former towards the proving your Ground of Faith Ab folutely Certain, if you be not equally Certain of the later? Surely none at all: For, 'tis not the whole Book in the tump that can be produc't to prove Fuith, or confute Herefy, but particular Texts; and, if Thele and the mainly fignificant Words in them, be not Abfolutely Certain, what becomes of the Absolute Certainty of your Rule, or your Faith? Nay, I am not fully fatisfied that their concurrent Testimony does strengthen the Certainty of even to much as the Books. For, I observe that our Judges suspect the Testimony of honest men, and mil doubt the justness of the Cause, if known Knights of the Post are call'd in to corroborate their Evidence. But, you have prudent Maxims of your own which are beyond the reach of Lawyers and to organize and or nago

37. You endeayour to come a little closer to the Point p. 29. and set your self to prove that Scripture it your Rule of Faith; ay, that it is: In order to which, You advance this Proposition, that Certainly all that be lieve it to be the Word of GOD, must take it for a Rule of Faith. These two confident Words, [Certainly] and Must lare very efficacious to perswade those who will take it uponyour Word, may they are so magisterial, that they impose a kind of necessity upon them of be lieving all is as you say, or else of denying your Authority, which would break Friendship. But, if they will not, but happen to be so uncivil as to require Proofs

for

for it they quite lose their force; and, which is worse, fuch politive Affertions make People expect very frong Arguments to Answer and make good fuch confident Affirmations; else it hazards Credit, to pretend Great Things and bring little or no Proof. How you will juflify chose big Words, we shall see shortly. In the mean time let us ask you, how you come to be thus Gertain of it? Is there no more requifit to a Rule, but to be the Word of God? Or, did you never read in Errour non-plust, long ago, p. 73, 74, 75, the Answer now given You to this Pretence, in the Confutation of your 12th. Principle; in which You endeavour to establish Scripture to be a Rale? Or can You fo much forget your felf, and your duty to reply to it, as to discourse still thus crudely with the fame confidence as if You had never read or heard of fuch a Book, or any thing alledg'd there to the contrary? If we must needs mind You of it so often. take these few words along with you now at least; and till you have reply'd to them, and others fuch which are there alledg'd, I befeech you let us be tir'd no more with fuch Talk, as ferves onely to amuse, but can never edify or convince. [To be writ by men divinely inspir'd, Error Nonto be Divine, Infallible, and the Word of God, fignifies plust, P. 74. no more but that they (the Scriptures) are perfectly. Holy and True in themselves, and beneficial to Mankind in some way or other; and, this is the farthest these Words will carry: But, that they are of themselves of sufficient Clearness to give fincerely endeavouring Persons such secutity of their Faith while they rely on them as cannot confift with Erroup Carbieb is requifit to the Rule of Faith) these Words fignish mot. They may be most Holy, they may be most True in themselves, they may be exceedingly Uletul, or Beneficial to Mankind, and yet not endow'd with this Property; which yet the Rule of Faith must have. bie

have.] And, pag. 75. [What then Dr. Se is to do, is to produce conclusive Reasons to evince that the Letter of Scripture has such a Perspicuity, and other Persections belonging to such a Rule, as must Ground that most Firm, and Unalterable, and (if rightly Grounded) Increable Affent call'd Christian Faith.] We see here the Question rightly stated, and the Point that sticks; now let's see whether your Proof does so much as rouch it, or

in the least mention it. 19721 107 bile 10

28. The Argument you make choice of, (I suppose it is your best, the matter in hand being of highest confequence) to prove that all who believe Scripture to be the Word of God mult take it for a Rule of Faith, is this. For, fince the reason of our believing is because God has reveald, whatever God has reveald must be believ'd, and a Book containing in it such Divine Revelations must be the Rule of our Faith. i. e. by it we are to judge what we are bound to believe as Divine Revelations. What a wild medly is here, instead of a Reason! Here are four Propositions involv'd. The First, is this : the reason of our believing is because God has reveald; and this is granted: onely you may note that we are equal-Church's Testimony as by Writing, if it be equally clear it was thus reveald; nay, more by the former than by the later, in case that way of afcertaining the Divine Revelation be more clear than this: nor does your First Proposition deny this, but rather afferts it. The Second, This, [whatever God has reveal a must be belas, tis nothing less. For, how does it follow that be-cause the reason of our believing is God's Revealing therefore we are bound to believe what God has reyeal'd, whether we know it or no? All then that can be faid

faid of it is, that 'tis pious Mon-lenfe, unless you add to it that we have also Certain Grounds God has indeed reveal'd it : For, otherwise, befides the danger of ere ing our felves in matters of the highest moment (and this unalterably too, in regard we entertain that Errour as recommended by the Divine Revelation) we shall moreover hazard to entitle God's Infinit veracity to a Falsehood, and make Truth it self the Anthour of Lies. The Third, that [a Book, containing in it fuch Revelations must be the Rule of our Faith] is absolutely deny'd. For a Book may contain in it Divine Revelations, and I may not know certainly it does contain them : Or, I may know certainly by very good Testimony it does contain them, yet not know certainly it does contain them all: Or, I may know it does contain them all, yet perhaps not be able to know any me of those Divine Revelations in particular, which are contain'd there; for example, if it be in a language I understand not : Or, tho' I do understand the language, yet by reason of it's mysterious Sublimity, and deep Sense, and thence Obscurity and Ambiguity in many passages relating to spiritual matters, and the Chief Articles of our Christian Profession, I cannot be affur'd with Absolute Certainty which is the right Sense of it; and therefore (confidering me as in the way to Faith, & that my Assent depends necessarily on the Truth of fome Preliminary which is the object of pure Reafon) I might not, nay cannot, with any true Reafon. firmly affent to what I fee may be an Errour; nor hazard my falvation upon an Uncertain Ground, and on which I know great multitudes have already Ship-wrackt. The Fourth By it we are to judge what we are bound to believe as Divine Revelations) runs upon the fame frain; for you are to shew us how by it 4 am to judge my felf . felf bound to believe any obing ut all as a Divine Rel velation, that is, as taught by Christ, with a Firm and Unalterable Affent, (fuch as Faith is) till I am Cerrain it is fo, by being afcertain'd be taught it. This is the True, This is the Main Point; which you flide over still as smoothly as a non-plust Commentator does of ver hard Texts, that puzzle him to explicate. I fav once more, 'tis the Main if not onely Point: for, till you have made out this, you can never prove that Scripture (taken alone) is a Ground of Faith at all, much less an absolutely Certain Ground and, least of all, pour Ground in particular. And therefore you faid very True when you lamented p. 28. you were in a hard case: for tho' (say you) there is an Absolute Certainty, and this Certainty lies in Universal Tradition, and we can shew this Universal Tradition, yet we cannot thew the Ground of our Certainty. For, you cannot thew Universal Tradition for every particular Text that concerns Faith without our Tradition - Rule for Doctrin nor Absolute Certainty you have the true Sense, tho' you had that Certainty for the Letter, without which 'tis not your Ground at all. A Certainty there is, but not by vertue of your Grounds, and fo 'tis none of your Certainty, nor your Ground neither. Whereas then you confess here that, if you cannot shew the true Ground of your Certainty you deserve to be either pity door begg'd, you fay very true: for we do from our hearts pity you, let who will take the tother part. We pity you to fee fuch excellent Wits, who, had they a good caute. would be honourably victorious, forc't by the Patronage of a bad one to employ their Talents in shiring about for by-paths to avoid meeting the Question in the face. We pity you for your being necessitated to impose upon your well - meaning Readers: with your fpecious . specieus pretences of Goos Calozo, instead of she wing them with Absolute Certainty (on your Grounds) that you have the true Sense of it in any one passage relating to the controverted points; without which you cannot with Henesty pretend it Gods Word as to those Points. And, if that kind of begging may do you any good, we shall carnestly and heartily beg of God's Infinite Mercy to give you hearts to seek Truth, and

candidly acknowledge it when found.

i had almost forgot your Id est, which conneds your Third and Last Proposition together [-must be the Rule of our Faith, Id est (fay you) by it we are to judge what we are bound to believe as Divine Revelations. These Idest's, which should be us'd to clear things, are ftill fo made-use of that they are the main Engmes to confound them. Let your Id est then say what it please, I must tell you plainly, you quite mistake the meaning of the Word Rule; It speaks Rellitude, and that such an Evident one as preserves those who regulate themfelves by it from obliquity or Deviation, that is, in our case from Errour. You ought then to have said-The Rule of our Faith, Id eft, by which, while we follow it, we shall be absolutely secur'd from erring in faith, For the Primary Effect of a Rule is to give Faith that prerequifit. Quality as elevates it to the Dignity of fuch a kind of Assent, and raises it above that dwindling, feeble, alterable affent call'd Opinion. But you will needs, (to avoid coming neer so dangerous a Rock) take it for a kind of Quantitative Measure, nor for a Qualifying Principle: Whereas, indeed, 'tis not the What or how much we are to believe, which is now our Question; but, the That we ought to believe any thing at all; or That you can by your Grounds have any Faith at all for

want of this Absolute Certainty, which you pretend to: Tis this I fay, which is the true Subject of our present Debate. For tho' we both held the same Quantity or Number of Points to a tittle, yet it might be Faith in one of us, and but Opinion in the other; may perhaps Opinion in both, if both of us wanted Certain Grounds to evince they were Christs Doctrin, which is the Formal Motive of our Faith. It belongs then to a Rule to aftertain both the That we are to believe, and the What. but the former Office of it is Antecedent and Principal. the later Collateral, and Secondary: Common Sense teling us that we ought first to determin whether there is any Faith at all, e're we come to debate what Points are of Faith, what not. These Fast-and-Look Doings make me, when ever I meet with an Idel fill exped it means [alind eft] and that, like your other Explication ons of your felf, it is brought in to divert our Evesto another Object instead of keeping them still fixt upon the fame.

40. Enough has been faid, I am fure too much ever to be Answer'd, to prove that Scripture alone as interterpreted by any Private Mans Judgment, wants the Chief Property of a Rule of Faith, Viz. fuch a Clearness as is able to give all forts of People, or the Generality of Christians (be they never to Sober Enquirers) Absolute Affurance of it's Sense, even in the highest Mysteries of our Faith, without needing the Church's Help Nor, will You ever be able to produce the Confent of all Christian Churches affirming that it has this Property. Wherefore, when it is call'd a Rule by fome of the *Dr. St. second Antients, it must be taken (as Mr. M. *fayes) with the Letter, p. 29. Interpretation of the Church adjoyn'd; which having the Living Sense of Christ's Law in her Heart, can animate the Dead Letter, and preserve it from Explications

any way prejudicial to the Faith received. And, thus indeed it may be call'd a Rule of Faith; because, as his thus understood, it cannot lead any into Errour, but, is of good use to abett Truth by it's Divine Authority. In which fense Councils proceed upon it often, and fometimes call it a Rule. And, I remember the Famous Laurey, when we were Discoursing once about Tradition thew'd me a little Book of his, in which, he goes about to prove, that Councils had frequently defin'd against Hereticks out of Scripture. On which occasion Lask't him, if he judg'd those Councils fram'd their Definitions by the fense they had of the Letter by their own human Skill; or by the fenfe of the Church, which they had by: Tradition: he answer'd, undoubtedly by the later; and that there would be no End of Disputing with Hereticks, had they taken the former Way. By which we may differn that still Tradition was in proper speech their Rule, even when they alledg'd Scripture. Other, call Scripture fometimes a Rule, because it contains Eaith; in which fense even some Catholicks call it a partial Rule because Part of Christ's Doctrinis contain'd in it, the other part descending by Tradition: which acceptation of the Word [Rule] is yet less Proper: because (as has been prov'd) it may be contained there, and yet we be never the neerer knowing our Faith meerly by virtue of Scripture's containing it. But no Catholick ever faid that every fober Enquirer may find out all necessary Points of Faith in Scripture totthout the Churchen Delp. A Doctrin, which You declare p. 21. You are far from being asbam'd of. And yet, let me tell You Sir, You will never find this Position of yours as it lies [without the Churches Delp:] in the Universal Tradition of all Chrittian Churches; and, unless You find this. You will never prove they held it a Rule in the

*See Sell. 23

the genuin and proper fignification in which we take that Word; (and the they flour deals it a Rule, in either of the former Senfes lately mention d, they impugn not

us at all who grant the fame. I made of alu boog lo at

14 1. You will needs run out of the way, pigo. to talk of a Judge of Controversies; but the best is You acknowledge you do go thus aftray, by acknowledging tis another distinct Controversy; and yet the you ac knowledge this, You still run on with it, that is, You still wander from the Point: 2 You triumphomightily p. 31. that it is impossible for us to bring such an unant mous Confent of all Christian Churches for our Infallible Judge or our Infallibility, as Protestants bring for their Rule. As for the later, where were your thoughts, Sin while you thus bad adieu to the plainest Rules of Diff course & Cannot we go about to demonstrate the Infallibility of a Human Testimony by Natural Mediums. but, in flead of Answering is, you must object against our Conclusion, and bid us bring the Confent of all Churches to abett that, which neither depends, nor is pretended to depend, on Authority, but on meer Realon? Cannot one fay two and three make five, but he must be prefently bobb'd in the mouth that he cannot shew the Consent of all Christian Churches for it; and that. unless he does this, let it be never so evident, 'tis not True? Tis very pleasant to reflect how brisk you are still with this Consent of all Churches; (I suppose because tis a Topick very seldom heard of in your Controversies) tho' as has been shewn over and over, 'tis not a jot to your purpole, nor avails any thing to the evincing you have an Absolutely - Certain Ground of your Faith. And, if we have an Infallible Rule, or fuch a Rule as permits not those to be deceiv'd that follow it, can there be any thing more Rational than to hold by confeconfequence, that there is an Infallible Judge, or that our Church can judge unerringly in matters belonging to Faith the word Judge onely fignifying that that Perfon of Perfons, are in Authority, or are Authoritative Deciders, to preserve the Integrity of Faith, and the Peace of the Church. So that, Supposing Church-Governours or Bishops, and that those Sacred Concerns are to be provided for, plain Reason demonstrates to us this too as well as the other, without needing the Conlent of all Christian Churches; the you need not to be told this does not want neither; unless you think that all the General Councils that defin'd against Hereticks, imagin'd they might perhaps be in an Errour all the while; and the Heretick, whom they condemn'd, in the right. Your happeal to all the Churches of the * p. 3. Christian World for your Rule, has a plausible appearance; but vanishes into air when one comes to grafp it. How often must it be repeated that you have as yet product no Rule at all for your Faith? For you have neither provid that Scripture's Letter, as to every Substantial mord that concerns Faith, is absolutely-Certain: nor that it has in it the nature of a Rule; nor that, 'tis your Rule, more than tis to all the Hereticks in the world: nor that your Affent to any Point upon that Rule, as made use of by you, (for want of Connexion between the Points to be believ'd, and the Rule on which they are believ'd,) can have the nature of true Faith in it. If talking big would do the deed, you would indeed do wonders; but let your Reasons be proportionable; otherwise, strong words and faint blows are but very illmatcht. Now, I must declare plainly I cannot see the least semblance of so much as one folid Proof in this whole Treatife of yours. If there be, confute me by shewing it, and maintaining it to be-such. You explain your.

ding it, and half asham'd so often to answer it. You talk much of God's Word; that we are bound to believe it, that it contains God's Will, and all things necessary in Salvation; and, twenty such sine things; which bear a Godly Sound, and would do well in a Sermon where all goes down glib, there being none to contradict you; but, are very dull and statin contravers. On the contrary, not one Argument have you even offered at, to prove you have Absolute Certainty of the Rule or Ground of your Faith, but have fall short in every one of those Considerations; both as to the Notions of Certainty, Ground, Rule, Faith; and that its your Ground, your

Rule, and your Faith. w Maire all and bus

142. A Rule to any thing, if we take that word in proper sense as we do in our modern Controversies. is the Immediate Light to direct us in order to our knowing that thing. For, in case it be not Immediate, but fome other thing intervenes that is needful to direct us, and by whose Rectitude we frame our thoughts as to that affair, and that it renders the other capable to direct us; that other becomes presently the Thing Ruled, and not the Rule: in regard it wanted the Recht tude of another thing to direct it, that fo it might be fit to direct us. Wherefore the Interpretation of Scriptime being more Immediate to the knowing the Senfe of it's Words, (that is to the knowing our Faith) than is the Letter, for it is manifest that all who have the Letter have not right Faith unless they make a right Interpretation of it; hence Mr. M. had reason to object that The Christian Church did not agree that every man is to interpret Scripture for himself, or to build his Faith upon his own private Interpretation of it: Nor ought you to be offended at his polition, in regard you told

us before p. 7. & 8. a Herarical Sense may ly under these General Words [Ebrist is the Son of God] and different Senses may be couch't under these, Christ is really in the Enchariff; and fo, (even according to your felf) he the Interpretation or the affiguing the Sense to those which makes True Faith or Herefy. Wherefore, tis plain that your own Interpretation of Scripture is. in true speech, your Rule; for That is a more Immediate Direction to give you the Sense of Scripture than is the Letter; which is Antecedent, and prefuppos'd to the Interpretation, as it's Matter or Object. Nor had you your Faith the you had the Letter, till you had interpreted it. And, besides, the proper and Immediare Effect of Interpretation, is to give the Sense of Words, and 'tis the Senfe of Scripture which is your Faith, and to your own Private Interpretation is unavoidably your Rule. If then you will youch, as you do all over, that the Universal Consent of all Christian Churches gave you your Rule, it must attest your way of interpreting Scripture too, by private judgments; Nay, it must moreover attest that way to be absolutely Certain; otherwise you can never thew how your kind of Protestant Faith, no better grounded, can be abfolutely Certain; and this, as to all the Doctrin that was taught by Christ and his Apostles; for both which you very unadvifedly undertook when you were at a pinch; hoping, I fuppose, to shift it off again with one of your transferring Expedients, or some fquinting [Id eft]. To what purpose is it then to tell us here p. 3 r. how a man (one of your Sober Enquirers I suppose) is to behave himself, where the Texts or places are doubtful. For, unless the Consent of all Christian Churches bring us down by their Univerfal Testimony that those methods are to be taken, and that they are absolutely Certain Means for all that ule .

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use them to interpret Scripture rights or come at the true Sense of it, you are still as incapable as ever of shewing us absolute Certainty for your Faith, or that you have any Faith at all by those Means. Nay, I much mistake you if your Principles will allow these Means no not even the Testimony which brings down to us the Sense of the Primitive Church (upon which you here pass a complement) to be more than Fallible. If you do, you admit our Rule: If you do not, I would advise you to prepare your Reasons to convince the World how a Fallible Authority can prove that what is built on it is absolutely Certain. However, you set the best Co. lour upon these Fallible Means you can; telling us, your Sober Enquirer is to make use of the best helps, the best and most reasonable means &c. tho' they are such that in likelihood it will take up his whole life time ere he can use and peruse them all, so as to compass fincerely this fatisfaction; nay 'tis ten to one he will dy a Seeker: and then he will have enquir'd very foberly, to go to the next world to ask the way to heaven. I wonder how many of the Church of England, or even of Geneva, made use of all these Means ere they finally pitch't upon their Faith: I much doubt-Vel duo, vel nemo-Few or none. And we would know of you whether any of those means, or all together, are abfolutely Certain. If none, you are still where you were, If you fay any or all, you will fight against Experience; for many who use all these Means do not with-standing differ. You would infinuate by the words, [doubtful places] that the Points your Sober Enquirers doubt of, are but unnecessary, sleight, or disputable; but alas! they are the highest Mysteries of our Christian Faith; and if they must take such pains, as to compare Scripture and Expositors, and the Sense of the Primirive Church (which will require peruling attentively a pretty Library) ere they can accept these for Points of Faith, what satisfaction is to be expected in all that Christ and his Aposles taught, by your Rule, which asks such laborious study to understand it's Sense in these; or by your method, which is both Endless, & when all is done Uncertain?

43. Of how different a Judgment the Primitive Church was, let a Chief Pillar of it, St. Athanafius inform us (Lib. de Synodis Arimini & Seleuciæ) where he blames some Clergy-men of his time for going about enquiring what they were to believe, in these words, Si credidiffent, nunquam, quasi Fidem non haberent, de Fide quæfiviffent. Sefe Infideles effe declaraverunt, cum id quærant quod non babent. If they had believ'd, they had never enquir'd, as if they did want Faith. They bave declar'd themselves to be Unbelievers by their enquiring after what they have not. So, that, it seems all your Sober Enquirers are (according to this Fathers Judgment) Infidels, or Unbelievers. Observe here the vast distance between your Principles and those of this Holy Father and most learned Controvertist. Nothing but feeking and enquiry (with the Epithet of fober to grace it a little) will ferve your turn; but, he tells us, on the quite contrary, that, if Wee feek, or enquire, we have no Faith at all: Which, in plain English, fignifies thus much; you judge that to be the onely way to Faith, which, he judges a plain Argument of having none. You are all for feeking for your Faith in Scripture; He, for taking what is already found to our hand some other Way, wch. must be by Tradition. One thing I should much wonder at, did not I know your private-spirited Principles; 'tis this, why amongst other means you affign for your fober Enquirer to make use of, you do not put the Fudgment of the Present Church (let it be your own if you please)

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please for one I fround think the Faith of the Others had more weight in the than all the reft pur together. It you do indeed hold it a True Church ; and tis far more eafy to know its fense, where it has thought fit to explicate it's felf clearly. The finding the fense of Comment tatours, and the Places compan'd, and of Primitive Antiquity, costs infinit trouble; whereas, there is no difficulty to know the fenfe of the Present Church, speaking to you by Living Voice, and confonant Practife. should think too, 'tie most agreeable to the Order of the World, the Unity of the Church, and the Maxims of Government (if you will allow any fuch to a Church)? that People Should follow the Doctrin of their Teachers. be led by their Pastours, and obey their Superiours rather than be left to their own private Fancies, in matters of fuch Concern, that, if they clash with them in their Judgment, it bezards to break all those vacred Open ders, by which the World fublifts. Let me ask you one thing, ere we leave this Points Is your fober Enquirer Bound to use these means for his satisfaction in doubtful Points, or not? You say expresly here, that, he is bound to do this; and, to I suppose you will be disatisfi'd with him, if he falls thort of this Duty. Lask next, did Mr. To use all these means in a doubtful Point, to compassa rational fatisfaction? How should he, when he was fatish'd, and confirm'd; and refolo'd in fo little time. Yet. for all your contrary Doctrin here, you are well fatiffid with him, nay, you undertake p. 172, to fatisfy the World that Mr. T. had fufficient Grounds for what he then faid; which was that he was much more confirm d in the Communion of our (the Protestant) Church, and resolv's to continue in it, Pray, Sir, was he a fober Enquirer or no? If he was, did he in two hours time, that Mr. Gand you were Disputing, use the means you fay your fober

fober Enquirer is bound to make the of in doubtful cales: is his was, if he dealt fincerely with Mr. G. and did not play booty? Did he in two or three hours time, pray, medirate, compare Scripture, and Expositours upon it, use the help of Spiritual Guides, & the fenfe of the Erimitive Church, which are but fome of the Means you preferibe b. 31. He made prodigious hast, if he did use those means. How comes he then to be so satisfied, nay, so refolved, without using those means; and so worthy of your Patronage, if he did not what you fay here, he was bound to do? Thele are Mysteries, which must be veil of from the eyes of the Vulgar, & Prophane. Nor is there any way to reconcile these Contradictions, but to understand you with this Clavis; that, you fay any thing that feems to ferve your turn, when you are disputing against us, and difelaim it again when the circumstance is alter d; and that, as you pretended that for your Rule of Faith, which not one in a thousand follow; to you pretend those methods must be taken, to understand your Rule right to the end we may not be deceived by it, which, neither are taken by any, nay, need not be taken at all. tho' you told us here men were bound to take them : the believing your word that your Antwer was competent (*which was indeed none) acquifted his Obligation, and *See the Anatton'd for his rafhnels. This, this alone, was so meri-wer to Dr. torious, that, it was equivalent to Prayer, Medication, ter, sed. 12. comparing Scripture, and Expositours upon it, the belp of 18,30. Spritual Guides, and the fense of the Primitive Church, which, you declare here, fuch as he were bound to confult for their fatisfaction in Faith. By which I guels your Teft to diftingtiff a Sober from a Raft Enquirer, is, whether he will rely on your Word or Skill for his fecurity . of Heaven. If he will, he is of your fober fort without more ado; and, need not trouble himself with those pain-

full Methods: If he will not, he must go through them all, or be Rafb. The Truth is, you play fure; and may fafely defy any man living ever to enquire himself soberly out of your Communion: For, whoever begins, shall

be fure to dy before he have enquir d half way.

44. At length, to my great Comfort (for tis tedious to find no Reafons to fpeak to, but still to be employ'd in confuting Miltakes) I am come to the last Task, that as far as I can difcern, will belong to my Province. Towards the end of pag. 31. your Discourse ayms to establish your kind of Judgment of Discretion; Which makes fuch a noise in your Books, and of late rings out of the Pulpit too. You make way to it thus, If we have the Confent of all Christian Churches against the onely pretended Infallible Judge, we have their Consent likewise that every Cross, Feb. 23 man is to judge for his own Salvation. Your Argument, 1686. Such as it is, stands thus, By the Conjent of all Christian Churches, there is no Infallible Judge, therefore, every man must judge for himself. It seems then nothing will content you now but Infallibility; and, if that be not to be had, every one may fet up for himself in the Judging Why, suppose the Governours of Our Profession. Church, when you left Her, or of your Own Church either, were Fallible; are you grown fo nice on a fudden, and your Conscience so tender in embracing any thing less than Infallibly-Certain, for Faith, that Fallibility will not ferve your turn, which hitherto; you fo contentedly hugg'd and ador'd, and so wittily derided any Certainty above it? Suppose they had but your Sufficient Certainty, or great Likelyhoods, fair Probabilities, or fuch like, for their Interpretations of Scripture; must they therefore lose their Power of Judging in that particular, because they are Bishops? Or, forteit the Dignity of Passours and Leaders, because they are not Infalli-

See Mr. Kidder's famous Sermon Preach'd at St. Paul's

Her You have fuch an aking tooth at the Churches insermeddling in Faith-matters, no not fo much as to help her Children in the most necessary Points (p. 21..) fo. they be doubtful, that neither profes't Infallibility nor acknowledg'd Fallibility will put you in good humour with Church-Governours; but out they must, and your fober Enquirer starts up in their stead. For be must judge whether they tell him right or no, when all's done; I fuppose by the light Scripture gives him, as he is to judge of the veracity of General Councils; and so we are got into the giddy whirl - pool of a Circle. He must learn the Sense of Scripture by them, and yet trust bimself interpreting Scripture, not them, for the Sense of it? 'Tis pitty but he had a blew Apron on, and a Tub to hold forth in what heavenly light he had gain'd, by interpreting Scripture after the Method you have shewn him. Tis true, if there were no Absolute Certainty in the way to Faith (and I believe you hold none in your Church) every man must shift for himself as well as he may; yet still even in that case, he is bound to do that which shall appear best, and come up as neer to Certainty as he can. And can he in any reason think his own Enquiry will bring him to more Certainty, than the Pastors of his Church, who had been sober Enquirers too themselves, and understood the Means you affign to make that Enquiry, perhaps a thousand times better than himself? If he thinks them better qualify'd. than him elf for interpreting Scripture, he fins against the Light of Reason, not to treat them rather than himfelf: For they have, in that Supposition, more knowledge than he; Tis left then, that he is to judge himfelf to be better qualify'd than his Church, her Bishops and all his Pastors are for that work: and, upon this brisk selfconceit, the Book of Scripture flies open on a sudden, discloses

difcloses it's Sender and discovers to him his Fatth! Cell tamily fuch a man is likely to have a very Reverent effect of his Church, her Bishops and Pastors; and yet your Principles would have all men fuch. Indeed, you would have your fober Enquirers, pray and meditate. But, it should feem they are to pray, amongst other flings. God would give them the Grace nor to obey of believe their Pastors to much as themselves in necessary Points: (Thope you hold the Tenet of a Trinity, Christy God-head, and fuch other Points, such) which otherwise their honest Natural Reason, conscious to it self of its own Ignorance, will very much tempt them to do: and to meditate on God's great Mercy, in giving them great er Abilities and better Affiltance than he does to his Church: for they are very ungrateful if they forget fo fignal and extravagant a Favour. But, let us fee what is to be meant by an Infallible Judge; for you do not parricularize your acception of those words; nor le your Reader fee what Judge, how, or for what reason we hold him Infallible.

45. If you mean by [Judge] an Authoritative Decider of Controversies about Faith (as was said above) and that (which is what we hold) his verdict is Infullible by proceeding upon an Infallible Rule, you must either pretend the Christian Church never permitted Church-Governours to exercise their Authority in deciding matters of Faith; or else that it never held they had an Infallible Rule to go by. And I believe your utmost attempts will fait to far short of producing any such Content of Universal Tradition for either, that it will be directly against you in both; and you must have a strange opinion of the Decrees of General Councils, in such cases, if you apprehend they held either of those self-condemning Tenets. And yet I cannot tell, but I have

I have made my felf too large a Promife concerning this Universal Confent of all Christian Churches being for us or not against us in this particular : For I remember now, that, when you were to flate the Notion of Tradienn you took in the Consent of all former Hereticks to make your Pradition for Scripture larger and firmer Letter, p. 7. than ours is against you, and to make your Argument stron . *Dr. sr. second ger by their concurrent Testimony; and I see a glimmer- Letter, p. 25. ing light already, which will grow very clear ere long, you take in the same infamous Gang to bear witness. against our Infallibility; And what a case is the Catholick Church in then? We can never expect those obilinote Revolters from that Church or those Churches which were then in Communion with Rome, willever acknowledge the Governours had a just Authority to declare against them as Hereticks (for they were all of them. to a man, true-blew Sober Enquirers) or that these Governours proceeded upon an Infallible Rule; for this were to cut their own throats, and acknowledge themselves Hereticks: a mortification not to be submitted to by much contumacious spirits. Now all these by your Principles are to be accounted Christian Churches, and are call'd fo very currently, and very frequently by you (p. 24, 25, 26, and in many other places) without any diffinction at all. And fo we are reduc'd to a very pretty condition, according to the admirable mould in which you have new-cast the Church. For, unless all those Hereticks of old, any Lutherans, Calvinists, and all the inferiour Subdivisions of Faith Reformers, vouchfafe to give their concurrent Testimony to the Infallibility of the Roman Catholick Church (which condemn'd them all; and, as appears by the Council of Trent throughout, by the same Rule of Tradition) she is to have no Infallibility at all allow'd her; her old Rule too

is condemn'd by them for a Falle Light, because it condemn'd them, and their New-Light; nor confequently can she be an Infallible Judge in Faith-Controversies. This is a very hard Law . Yet your fevere Discourses allow us no better quarter. You alledge that the Eastern Churches utterly deny the Roman Churche's Infalliblely, tho' they be of very different denominations. You mean (I suppose) amongst the rest, the Nestorians, Entychians, and fuch kind of good folks. And can you without blushing avail your self of such concurrent Testimonies against the Body communicating with the Roman, and her Infallible Rule, whose Ancestors were condemn'd by that very Body to which the present Roman-Catholick Church uninterruptedly succeeds; and were cast out of the Church for receding from the Christian Doctrine, held even then upon that very Rule?

46. But what have we to do with any of your pretended Christian Churches, whether Eastern, or not-Eastern, Modern, or Antient; many or few? Or, what have you to do with them either, if you would, as becomes a Controvertift, speak home to us. You know already we place the Infallibility of our Church in delivering, defining and Judging of Faith-Controverfres, in the Absolutely Certain Rule of Tradition. All therefore that have adher'd to Tradition as their Rule, must allow to Her this Inerrableness, while she adheres to it, else they must condemn themselves. And those pretended Churches which have deserted Tradition, can never, for many reasons, be of any competent Authority against the Roman-Catholick. For, having no Certain Rule, they can have no fure Ground of what they believe or alledge against her: And, besides, being her Enemies, and condemn'd by her, and that by vertue of this very Rule they carp at, common Equity tells every man his not a pin matter what fuch men fay of that Rule or that Church either, whether those men live East. West North, or South. I perceive by your far stretcht words here p. 31. [All the Churches of the Christian World All the Eastern Churches tho of very different denominations, that you imagin the force of an Authority depends meerly on the Number of the Witnesses; whereas we make account it depends much more on their Weight; that is, on their Knowledge, and on their Sincerity, or Indifferency of their Wills, as to the Person or Affair concerning which they are to witness: And Fallible Congregations, which are both Out-casts, and Enemies, have for each of those regards, no weight at

47. You have another Fetch yet left to prejudice the Reader against our Tenet. For, you often make mention of our Infallibility, the Roman, or the Roman Churches Infallibility, and (as appears p. 15. and 16) of the Infallibility of the Particular Church of Rome : whereas the Question, and our true Tenet, is, of those many particular Churches communicating with the Roman : fo that you feem defirous to convince us you are refolv d never to fpeak to any point fincerely or represent it ingenuously. For this sleight, tho' it feems trivial, infinuates into your Readers, that we hold the very Spot of Rome is the precise, and adequate mold in which Infallibility is cast. Please then to remember, and pray let it be the last time we tell you of it, that it is her following the *felf-evidently certain Rule of Tradition, in *See First L. which as a Controvertist I do, in this Dispute, place terp. 18. her Infallibility. That, being thus absolutely Certain of her Faith, we can prove the is qualify'd to be an Infallable Judge of Faith. That every Bishop is a Judge

of Faith-Controversies in proportion to his Sphere, and the Highest Bishop above them all : but still, the lest refort or Test of their final obliging to Belief (for any one may oblige his Diocesans to Silence for Peace's sake is with reference to the Body of the Church; and the Infallibility of the Church is refunded into the Certains ty of her Rule; and there it refts. Hence, confeious to your felves of the want of fuch an Infallible Rule, you dare pretend to no Infallible Judge, but are forc't to leave every particular man to his private Judgment of Discretion; tho you experience it hatters your Church no better principled, into thousands of Sects. In a word in the way of our Controversy, all Discourse ought to be gin Originally, and end Finally in an absolutely Certain Rule of Faith; that is, in such a Rule as influences our Tenets with the same Certainty. We are sure we have fuch a Rule, and, fo, we are fure we have true Faith; and we are fure you can have no Certainty that You have true Faith, because true Faith requires Absolute Certainty, and, therefore, an Infallible Rule which you renounce. This is the main Point between us, on which depends all the rest, whether it relates to an Infallible Church or Infallible Judge. Look it then in the face; spare it not, but level your whole quiver of Resfons at this mark. Unless you do this, you do but trifle : you beat the bush, and scatter leaves, but spring nothing. While this Infallible Rule remains unconfered. you must confess there may, and ought to be an Infallible Judge; and your Judgment of Discretion is convinced to be a meer Libertinage, forcibly granted to all, for want of Principles in your felves to Ground them certainly in their Faith, keep them fleady in it, and reduce them to it when they deviate.

48. To come closer, and take a more distinct view of

this Judgment of Discretion, I will acquaint you how far and in what I allow it, how far and in what I reject it. I grant that every man is to judge for his own falvation and to endeavour by his Reason to find the Way to right Faith. I grant with you that all Mankind agrees in it; and therefore wonder at your self-contradiction to make us difseree to it, who certainly are some part of Mankind. I grant that, otherwise, 'tis to no purpose to go about to make Converts: I add, nor for you, and me, to write Controversies. I grant that every man is to judge of the best way to Salvation, and of all the Controversies between us and you; and especially of the true Grounds of Faith; and to be well fatisfy'd who proceeds on a Certain Rule, who not; and that the contrary Tenet is as ridiculous as what's most, unless your putting upon us, against your daily experience, such a sottishness as to hold it. I add, that, fince every man is to judge of his Grounds, therefore the Rule of Faith must be such as needs not much Learning and Reading, *but must ly level to every man's Natural *SeFaith vind. Light of Understanding; as the nature of Testifying P. 132, 133. Authority, and it's Certainty does. I will grant you moreover, that to deprive Mankind of this Priviledge of judging thus, is to debarr him of the Light and Use of his Reason, when 'tis most needful for him; that is, when it should direct him how to find out the way to his Eternal Happiness, and, avoid the paths that lead him to Eternal Misery. But, I utterly deny, that therefore, he ought to think it Difcretion to hammer out his Faith by the dints of his private and unelevated Reafon, from Words that are of fo deep, and mysterious a sense; and this, after he has experienced that multitudes of other men, as wife or wifer than himfelf, and (for ought he can discern) very sincere too, do their best to understand them right; and yet, as appears by their contradicting

one another in matters of Ihighest importance, one of those Great, and Learned Parties, does erre most dance. roufly . I deny that his Difcretion can lead him to judge that God's Providence has left no absolutely Certain Way to Faith it being of fo vast a Concern, and highest neceffity: Or that it can command him to Affent firmly and imalterably to any Tenet as a Truth, nay, profess it to be fuch, even with the laying down his Life to attest in and yet that, notwithstanding, it may be a Lye, for any thing can be known by the Grounds he goes upon And, therefore, I deny that, in case Faith depends on fome Authority bringing it from Christi (without Cortainty of which none can be Certain tis. True at all) that Authority should be Fallible in that affair, and perhaps deceive him while he trusts it, or relies on it: Or in case it depends on some other Means (viz. Scripture's Letter, and his own Interpretation of it that Means should not certainly bring him to the End, if he makes use of it to the best of his power: I deny it to be Difcretion to think himself capable to judge he has Absolute Certainty of the Intire Books of Scripture, even to fuch particular Words or Verses he builds on, but by our Tradition for Doctrine : as likewise of their Translations and Transcriptions all along; and, of the Copies being taken at first from the true Original; whence I deny he can with true reason judge his Faith True; since a fault in any of these may make it False. I deny that he can with any Discretion judge that the ways you prescribe p. 31. for your Sober Enquirer to understand the Letter of Scripture right, and fo come at true Faith. (viz. comparing Scripture and Expositours upon it, belp. of spiritual Guides (who confess they may all be deceived. and so may mislead him) and knowing the sense of the Primitive Church &c.) are the means left by God for Men

Men to arrive at Faith and Salvation; fince to do this, he fees to many volumns must be read over, compar'd, and well-weigh d, that in all likelihood, a hundred parts. of Mankind for one (I may fay a thousand) would Dy erethey could make a certain choyce which lide to take in dubious points; and to add to his discomfort those Points which of all other, are of highest concern, as are the Trinity, Christ's Godhead, the Real Presence of Christ's Body in the Sacrament, the Efficacy of God's Grace, and fuch like, are the most dubious: as being most controverted by the Pretenders to the Scripture-Rule. I deny he can with any Difcretion, when he comes to receive fatisfaction of the Absolute Certainty of his Faith, suffer himself to be fobb'd off with telling him there is Absolute Certainty of fuch a Book which contains it; when common Sense tells him he is as far as ever from having fuch a Certainty of his Faith, unless he has the Jame Certainty he interprets that Book right; and does not err pernicioully by mifunderstanding the sense of it in those important Articles: Especially, since your selves, tho it be against your own Interest, are forc't to confess other Great and Learned Bodies had most grievously mitunderstood its meaning, who had both the same Letter, and the same Means to look into it that he has, & all that your Grounds afford him. I deny, he can with the least Discretion judge it possible that all Christian Fathers could forget to day what they held yesterday; or that they should, if they remember'd it, knowingly refolve to damn themselves and Posterity, by teaching them a wrong Faith; or, that they could conspire to do fo if they would; and consequently, that he ought not, if he acts discreetly, judge, that this Rule of Tradition is an absolutely, or infallibly-Certain Conveyer of Christ's Faith down to Our Dayes. Whence, I deny that he can with the least grain. of Diferetion refuse to communicate with those who proceed on fuch an evidently Certain Rule, and are found in Possession of their Faith upon that secure Tenure; and adhere to those others who declare against any Infallible Rule: that is, who confess the means they have to know any one particular Point of Faith or (which is all one) any Faith at all, is fallitite: that their Guides may perhaps all millead them, and their Rule permit the Fol-lowers of it to Err. You see now how we allow them the Use of their Reason, and Judgment of Discretion. till it brings them to find a Certain Authority; and, when they have once found That, the same Judgment of Discretion, which shew'd them that Authority was Absolutely Certain, obliges them to trust it, when it tells them what is Christ's Faith; without using their private Judgment any longer, about the particular Points themselves thus afcertain d to them, but submitting to It. In doing which, yet, they do not at all relinquish their Reason. but, follow and exercise it. For, nothing is more Rational than to lubmit to an Authority which my Reason has told me is Absolutely Certain, in things which the same Reason assures me can no other wayes be known certainly but by that Authority.

49. Now, let us consider the Judgment of Discretion, as understood by you, of which your sober Enquirer makes use to find out his Faith. Tis onely employ'd about searching out the sense of Scripture's Letter by Fallible means; which he can never hope will preserve him Certainly from Errour, let him do his very best; since he is told, even by your selves, that Great Bodies of very Learned Men, and acute Scripturists do follow the same Rule, and yet erre in the highest Articles of our Belief; nay, he sees himself, by daily experience, how many Sects follow that for their Rule, yet vastly differ.

differ of Whence, instead of judging atthereetly the tommits the most absurd Musifererion in the world to hahard his falvation upon his own meter pretation of Scripture, when, at the same time, he is told by those very Men who propose to him this Rule, that there is no ab-Chire fecurity (neither by his own Indoffry, nor his Churche's verzoity from wing the chat Theterprotection. And, not onely this but he feet or may fee, if he will fiberty enquire, what Certain Grounds are propos'd by others; and yet fuffers his Reafon, and the Truth to be run down with the noify hubbubs against Popery: and, either out of a blameable Weaknels, or, perhaps out of an inexcusable obstinacy, rejects those Grounds, or difregards the looking into them. I fay again, Inexcusable: For, the very Nature of Faith tells him, that, tis an Unalterable Affent, and, that it cannot possibly be a Ly; whence, common fense will tell him, 'tis not to be hoped for amongst those who confess that all the Knowledge they have of each particular Point of Faith, (that is of any Faith) is Fallible; and, onely likely to be had amongst those who own and maintain their Grounds cannot deceive them; fo that, fuch a man, if he ever came to a due Reflexion upon what most concerns him, fins against the Light of Reason, in many regards; and, what you call Judgment of Discretion is convinc't to be the most Unjudicious Indiscretion imaginable: And, your fober Enquirer, who builds all his hopes of falvation upon fuch a Judgment, proves himself (the weight of the Concern being duly consider'd) to be the most rash and hair-brain'd Opiniastre, and the most credulously blind, that ever submitted and prostituted his Rational Faculty (with which God has endow'd him, and will require a frict account of him, how he has us'd it) to a most Groundless and Improbable Conjecture. Difregarding all Authority out of his prefumption on his own Skill,

or that he is more in GOD's Favour than the whole Church and I much fear, our of a fpiritual Pride and felf-conceit, that he can find out all necessary Faith well enough of himself, without being beholding to any Church at all; or, (as you instruct him here p. 11 and declare openly and avowedly you are not affam'd it) without the Churches Delp. Which vis the very First Principle, may, the Quinteffence of all Herefy | Fanaticifm in the Egg, perfect Enthulialm when hatch's and downright Atheism when fledge. be run down with the noify hubbuds against Popery; and, either out of a blameable Weakness, or, perhaps out of an inexcutable oblinacy, rejects thore Grounds. ordificantly the looking into them. I far again from with the very Nature of Fair brells from thirty 'is an Challerable Affect, and, that it cannot pombly be a Live whence, common fente will tell him, 'ris not to be ledge they have of each particular Point of Fairly char wal any laim) is Laffiffe; and, onely lakely to be bed.

among the so who es I of M. I'm their Councie can to a due Reflexion upon what most concerns him, has agunti the Light of Realon, in many regards; and, whar you of hydrining of Discreton is convine to be the most confidence indication marginables. And vond wer Enquirer, who builds all his hopes of Clyanachus on fiel a Judgment, proves humble the week to the Concern being dally considered) to be the most rain and hir-berin'd Cointries, and the most creditions blind. Marry or find and and provided and Rangorilla ed a Out which Cod has enjoy'd him, and will require fine account of him, how he has used to toe that Coundlets and In probable Contrained Direction to the service of his reclumption on his one shall

THE FOURTH

Catholick Letter

IN

ANSWER

TO

Dr. Stillingsleet's SERMON, Preach't at GUILD-HALL, November 27th. 1687.

Entituled,

Scripture & Tradition

Compared,

Addrest to His AUDITORY.

By John Sergeant.

Published with Allowance.

London Printed, and sold by Matthew Turner at the

Lamb in High-Holbourn. 1 6 8 8.

(1)328.

Catholick Letter

AMSWER

Dr. Sailingfleer's SERMON, Preach't at Guille - HALL, November 27th, 1687.

Entituled.

Societies & Ceapition

Compared,

Addrest to His AUBITORY.

By John Sugami.

Partitions for the Allehouse.

Lorina Princed. and fold by Manker Transc at the

cal Contest in which we we engaged, into a Dispute

READER.

Perhaps the smart Expressions and plausible Methods that Dr. St. so affects in his late Discourse concerning the Nature and Grounds of the Certainty of Faith, in which he pretends to Answer the Catholick Letaters, may have rais'd Expectation in many indifferent men, and Triumph in some of his Partial Admirers; wherefore, to stay the Appetites of the some, and give some check to the over-ween ing of the later: I thought it sitting to say somthing here by way of Preface, to give our Readers a short Account of his main Performances in that Discourse, till I come to publish a Compleat Answer to the whole. What I affirm of it, and undertake to make good, is;

1. That he so strangely prevaricates from the whole business we are about, that he even forgets we are Writing Controvetsy; and would turn the Polemie

cal Contest in which we are engag'd, into a Dispute of School-Divinity; bearing the Reader in hand, That we are Treating of Faith, as formally Divine, and of all the Intrinsical Requisites to it, as it is such; tho' none of them be Controverted between us, and Some of them are perhaps onely Knowable by GOD bimself. The meanest Restecter may discern how impossible 'tis for the Dr, My self, or any mandiving, to put fuch Particulars as thefe into our Proofs, or Arguments; and how unpardonable an Absurdity 'tis to alledge them in our Circumstances. The very nature (I fay) of Controversy, obliges and restrains us both to Speak of Faith precisely according to what is Controverted between the Contending Parties; and the nature of our present Contest, which is about dit Absolutely Certain Rule to know this matter of Fact, that Christ and his Apostles did Teach the Doctrines we Profes, determines us both to Speak of Diwine Faith precisely as it stands under such a Rule, recommending our Faith to us, as deliver'd by Christ, and proving it to be his genuin Doctrin.

pretend, he neither shews from the Nature of Haith, as it lies under our Consideration, that it does not need the Perfect Certainty we require; 'nor that the Certainty he assignes to make us adhere to it as True, is not Perfect Uncertainty; since

To the Reader.

the does not bottom it on the firm Ground of the things themselves pulsone us, in which Creative Wisdome has imprinted all Truths; but; on our own wery Apprehensions, or undoubting Persuasions; which must necessarily be Unsteady, when the Knowledge of those Things does not Fix them. Particularly (which more closely touches our present Controvers) the Certainty be substitutes to that advance by us, swhich excludes Deception, is impossible to be manifested by Outward Arguments to others, being only his own Interiour Satisfaction or Opinion; which, as it is Invisible, so it may, in Disputes, be, with just reason; Rejected by any man ut his pleasure:

Lastly, Whereas he pretends to lay Brounds for the Absolute Operainty of Faith, he shall nesser be able to shew he has laid any one Bround thus Certain (which is what he pretended) worthy the Name of a Bround, for the only Point in debate; viz. That Christ and his Apostles caught thus or thus; but instead thereof, such feeble Poundaions, as leave Christian Fuith, whose Truth despends netessarily upon the Truth of Christ's Teaching It, in the opprobrious and scandalous condition of being possibly (or perhaps) False. In a word, he was to shew the Absolute Certainty of his Grounds of Faith, and he so bandles the matter, that one would think

To the Reader.

think, instead of shewing them, he were she wing their was no such Certainty Requisit, and so when needs

to be shewn.

The rest of his Answer consists, generally, of inpertinent Excursions, difingenuous Cavils, misey Avok dances of any Rub that Thould binder his Discourse from fliding on Smoothly. His mistakes (whether Sincere or Affected the Reader is to judge) are numberless, his scornful jests frequent, and either meer Trifles, or built upon Chimeraes of bis own Invention. All which deliver'd in Poignant and Smart Language, give a pretty tang of Gayity and Brishness to his Dis courses, and counterfeit a kind of livelines of Reason when as I dare avouch, and shall make it good, be he not one Single Argument dat is Pertinent and Sincere in the whole Course of is Answer. I pass by his Omiffions, which are both very many, and most important, as likewife but be does not take his Adversaries Discourse End-wayes, as I did His; nor gives the due force to his Arguments; but Skips up and down, here and there, Skimming off the Superficial part of them by Playing upon his Words, with our regarding the full Sense; that so be might make a more plausible mock - shew of an Answer. Lastly, his Evasions, as is the natural Progress of Nonplust Errour, are still worse and worse, and are Confined by being Detected. Tis easy to dis-

To the Reader.

cern by his Expressions he is much Piqu'd and out of Humour; nor can I blame him; for 'tis too severe a Tryal of Patience, for a Man of his great Abilities and Authority, to be so closely prest to shew his Grounds why he Holds it True (or which is the same, Impossible to be false) That the Faith he pretends to, was indeed Christs Doctrine, and to find himself utterly unsurnish't with any means to perform it.

But I have reason to hope there will need no more to let the Reader see that all that Glisters in the Drs. Writings is not Gold, but his carriage in this Sermon of his which I now come to examine; and to make him judge, that, if he hath dealt so delusively with his Auditors when he spoke out of the Pulpit in God's Name, be will scarce behave himself more sincerely towards

me, when he speaks in his own.

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To the Render.

cem by his Expressions be is maich Piqu'd and out of Hamour; nor can I blance him; for 'vis too severe a Tryal of Palience, for a Man of his great shifters and Authority, to be so electronessed to here his Grounds why he Italia is Alerte (or which is the same, Hindustones in Alle of Alle). That the Path he pretends to, was indeed Christs Doctrine, and to find himful utterly a shapish't with any means to perform it.

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THE FOURTH

Catholick Letter.

Gentlemen,

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Hen Controversies are Preach't out of Pulpits, every Wellmeaning Hearer is apt to conceit, that what sounds thence is

to be receiv'd as a Voice from Heaven: Too great a Difadvantage to be admitted by a Person concern'd, who judges he is able to fhew 'tis but a false Eccho: especially, when he fees this forestalling the World by a Sermon, is a meer preparation to turn the Question quite off the Hinges; and, withal, as the Preface intimates, to bring it from the handling one fingle Point, which bears all the rest along with it, to the debating of many; none of which can be decided, till That be first clear'd. Hence I esteem'd it not only a Justice to my self, but a Christian Duty to others, to Address my Defence to You, his Auditory; who (I fear) were led into Errours by many particulars in that Sermon, relating to our Controversy. I have reason to hope this Discourse will keep your Thoughts Impartial; which done, I will defire no other Umpire of our Contest, at present, but your selves.

s. 2. It being the Chief and most Precise Duty of a Controvertist to secure the Truth of Christian Faith,

and this not being possible to be done, without proving it True That Christ or his Apostles taught it: hence, it has ever been my Endeavour to establish that Fundamental Verity in the first place, by fettling some Method that might fecure it with a perfect or Absolute Certainty. Nature tells us, an End cannot be compassed without a a Means enabling us to attain it; whence, the first thing to be examin'd is, what that Means is, that is to give us this Certainty. Your common Reason assures you, that what's [True] cannot possibly be False; and the common Sentiment of all Christians, and the very Notion of Faith it self, has, I doubt not, imbu'd you with this apprehension, that your Faith cannot but be True: nor does any thing found more harsh to a Christian Ear than to affirm that All Christian Faith may perhaps be but a Lying Story; which yet 'tis unavoidable it may be, if it may not be True that 'tis Christ's Doctrine.

9. 3. You will wonder perhaps, when I acquaint you this is my greatest quarrel with Dr. St. and others of his Principles, that they make all Christian Faith possible to be Falfe. Dr. Tillotfon, with whom he agrees, and whose Rule of Faith he approves, maintains there, that there is no Absolute Security to be had from our being Deciev'd in judging we have the right Letter, or right Sense of the Holy Scripture, or that they were Writ by those Divinely-inspired Persons; but that, notwithstanding all the certainty we can have of those * Rule of particulars, * It is possible all this may be otherwise. This Faith. p. 118. I fay, as appears by my Preface to the Second Catholick Letter, and by my Discourses quite through all the Three, is our Grand Contest, under which all our

other differences fublume. But this Dr. Sr. was fo prudent as to conceal from you, left it should shock all his well meaning Hearers; and I do affure you, and

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shall show it, that, in those matters which he thought it expedient to let you know, he so misrepresents every thing, that he has both deluded You, injur'd the Truth, and quite dropt the Question. Whether he is to make satisfaction to Truth and to Tou, or I to Him, is to be determin'd by the Evidence I bring to make good my Charge. To State the Question then.

s. 4. As to the Holy Scriptures, my very Principles oblige me to declare that what I attribute to them, is, First, That they have All those Excellencies which Dr. St. yields them, and one more which he does not:

of which hereafter.

Secondly, That they are Profitable to all the Ends St. Paul writing to Timothy ascribes to them; and that in such a high measure, that I do from my heart grant them to be so great an Instrument of our Salvation, that the Church had been at an incredible loss without them; & that not near half the number of Christian Souls would have been sav'd, had it not pleas'd God to leave to the Church such a Powerful Means to instruct them in a virtuous life, and raise them up to it.

Thirdly, That, when they are animated with the Sense of the Divinely-Inspired Writers by a Gertain Interpretation, they are very useful to consute Hereticks; and that, Thus Interpreted, they are with much profit made use of, to that end, by Fathers and

realistics committee to history

Councils.

Fourthly, That, tho they were written on several occasions, it was not without the Design of God's good Providence; which orders all our Actions to the bringing about his Best Ends, however they be occasional to us; much more an Affair so mainly important to the Churches improvement.

Fifthly, That there was also a peculiar Providence

in preferving the Letter from any material Corruption; and, that the Second Causes by which this Providence exerted it self, was the most obligatory Care of the Church to whom those Sacred Oracles were committed, and the Knowledge she ever had of Christ's Doctrin.

6thly, That the Sense of Scripture is so sublime in Spiritual Points and high Mysteries of Faith, which are a bove Nature, and could only be known to the World by Divine Revelation, that no men by their Private Judgments, much less all forts of men coming to Faith (and therefore unelevated and unenlighten'd by It) can arrive at the knowledge of it's Sense by the Letter in those difficult Texts, with such an unerring Certainty as is requifit for that most Firm, Rational and Unalterable Affent, call'd Faith; and, therefore, that in Thefe, they need the Help of the Church: Whereas in other passages that are Historical, Moral, &c. where the subject matter is more obvious to ordinary Reason, they are either clear of themselves, or may be clear'd, as much as is necessary, by the Learning of the more Knowing Faithful. For the same reason I hold, that Scripture, thus privately interpreted, is not convictive of Hereticks, who have imbib'd a contrary fentiment to that of the Divine Enditer : because those men admit no Certain Interpreter of those difficult places. And, this want of clearness in fuch Texts, I do not take to be a Privative Imperfection; but, on the contrary, to argue a very high Perfection in Scripture; viz. as Vincentius Lirinenfis has told us 1200 years ago, Commonitor, cap. 2. It's Deep Sente: Whence tis rather to be call'd properly, a Difproportion of that Sense to the low Conceptions of Private Judgments looking after Faith; or an Obscurity, relatively to fuch Persons, than an Absolute one: since the Faithful, who are instructed in that Sense, are both capable

capable to understand it right, and moreover to discover still more and more Excellent Truths in it.

7thly, That for this reason, I cannot hold the Letter of Scripture privately interpreted the Rule of Faith, or a Means for people of every capacity, looking after Faith, to know the Sense of it in those Dogmatical Articles; with such a Certainty, as was shewn *above to be Necessary for a Ground of Faith; nor can I allow that the Truth of Christian Faith ought to be built upon such a Sandy Foundation as are those Private Interpretations. And, therefore, that there needs fome other Rule to Afcertain people of all forts what is Christ's true Doctrin in those points. Moreover, I make account the Experience of all Ages since Christ's time abets my Position. Every Heretick, and all his Followers, relying on his private Interpretations of Scripture for his wicked Blasphemies: as the Socinians do now, who are (as far as we can difcern) fincere and exact Followers of that Rule, or Users of that Means; and yet, fall short of Christ's genuin Doctrine, denying his Godhead, and the Mystery of the B. Trinity, A plain Argument that That cannot be the way to Truth, which such vast multitudes have follow'd, and yet have been led into Errour, unless we knew them all to be wilfully fincere, or strangely negligent; which we can neither know, nor have reafon to think. And, as experience has shewn this to every mans eye, fo neither is it my fentiment onely. The fame * Lirinenfis telling us, That by reason of the Scripture's Depth, as many Opinions as there are Men feem possible to be drawn thence. Where he ascribes the obscurity of the Letter not meerly to the fault of the Persons, nor the hardness of the Words, in which the Sense is deliver'd, but to the Profoundness of the Sense it felf; Reason and Experience both informing us, that, where

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* Ibid.

where the matter is above the Readers capacity, tho' the Words be never so plain, yet the Doctrine is not easily comprehended without some who is already skill'd in that Sense.

Word may perhaps give you fome prejudice against it, because our Saviour reprehended the Jews for some unwarrantable Traditions of theirs. This obliges me to give you a true Character of our Tenet concerning It, and to make known to you particularly what [Tradition] means, as we understand it in our Controversies; which Dr. St. (tho' he knows it) will never do; but, on the contrary, (as shall be feen) misrepresents it all along very disingenuously in every particular. What we hold

of it then, is,

First, That the Apostles, by their Preaching during the whole time of their lives, settled the self-same Christian Doctrin in the minds of the Generality of the Faithful, dispersed in several Countries; and not only at large and particularly explicated it, and first is by their heavenly Preaching, but riveted it (as we may say) by Miracles; sounded Churches, and constituted Disciplin; by means of which, and their own Example, they establish them in the Prastice of that Doctrin Lastly, They recommended the continuing it as the means of Salvation; and, consequently, that the swerving from it themselves, or neglecting to educate their Children in it, was the assured way to Eternal misery to them and their Posterity.

adly, That this vast multitude unanimously fettled in the same Faith is that which we make the First Source of Cradition; which had no more to do but to attest to the next Age what the First had received and practice, nor could they forget a Doctrin which was so recom-

mended,

mended, and according to which they had led their Christian lives so long: Nor could true Faith (the Parent of all other Virtues) which was in their hearts, no nor even the Natural love to themselves and their Children, permit them all to be so Wicked as to decline from it voluntarily, or neglect to educate the others in it; however, it was to be expected there would be now and then a failure in some Particulars, deserting the former Doctrin, and drawing Proselytes after them.

adly, That, the same reason holds for the Continuate Delivery of the same Doctrin by the Second Age to the Ibird, and so still forwards; the most powerful Motives God himself could propose being laid to oblige Christians not to deviate from it in the least, or be carelesto recommend it. And those Motives too a thousand times more lively imprinted and apprehended by the heaven-instructed Faithful, than they were by any in the

former Ages of the World, before Christ.

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4thly, That by [Ctabitton] then is meant, The Testimony of the whole foregoing Age of Christians to the next age, of what had been deliver'd, and explain'd to them by their Living Voice and Practice. Or, taking Ctabition (as it ought to be) for Oral and Practical both, Tis, A Continu'd Education of undergrowing Posterity in the Principles and Practice of their Immediate Predecessours.

that this Rule cannot (on it's part) deceive us. For, purting that it was fill follow'd, or, that Posterity still believed and practis'd as their Immediate Fore-Fathers did, who at first believ'd and practis'd as the Apostles had instructed them; it is manifest the Last Age of the World must have the same Faith that the First Age of Christianity had. Whence follows evidently that no Errour Errour could possibly come in at any time unless this

Rule of Tradition had been deferted.

6tbly, That Tradition, thus understood, (and we never understood it otherwise) being the Living Voice and Practice of the Church in the immediate Age before, is applicable to all even of the lowest Capacity; as we experience, to some degree, in the instructions by Passours even now adays. And, since it delivers it's Sense (which, in those that have follow'd that Rule, has been even now shewn to be Christ's Doctrin) by Preaching, Catechizing, Explaining, daily Practising, and all the ways imaginable to make it understood, 'tis also an Absolutely-Clear Conveyer of Christ's Doctrin downwards. Add that, should it's sense be at any time misapprehended, the Church and her Passours can explain their own meaning, pertinently to the Askers, Doubter's or Mistaker's Exigencies; which a Letter in a Book cannot.

7thly, That the Chief Care of the Church was to inculcate to the Faithful, and preserve inviolate the Chief Points of the Christian Faith; and, therefore, that Cranition did most particularly exert it's self in

Teaching and Transmitting Those.

8thly, 'Tis not to be deny'd but Scriptural Tradition went along with this other we have explain'd. For the Church having the same sense in her breast which the First Writers had, were, consequently, the best interpreters of it; which was one Reason why the Fathers and Councils often made use of it to confute Hereticks, and comfort the Faithful by it's concurrence. But, when they were to convert any to Faith, it was never heard, they took such a Method as to put the Bible in his hand, and bid him look for his Faith there; telling him 'twas Plain even in the highest points, that were dubious or Controverted, to every capacity.

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gride, That, hence, Scripture, "without the Churches *Dr. Si's. Sehelp, was never held by them Anciently, nor can with cond Letter, reason be held by an now to be the Rule of Faith, in the P. 21. fense we use that word; that is, to be a Means or Way for All who are coming to Faith, to arrive unerringly at

Laftly, we hold that the Sense of Scripture's Letter, in those sublime Points, surpasses the apprehensions of private men coming to Faith; and, fo, the Letter alone cannot be an affured Ground to build the Truth of Christian Faith upon : whence follows that Tradition (which is Plain and Easy) and only It, can be in Proper Speech the Rule of Faither gaining tud at Alan T went roomin

6. This then is the true State of the Question between us. This is our true Tenet, both concerning Scriptwee and Tradition, and what are the Points to be afcermind by them. Now, let us fee how the Sermon represents us, and whether your admired Preacher does so much as touch any one of these particulars, sie bout

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1 7. In the first place you may please to take notice that he never lets you know, or so much as suspect that the main Contest between him and me is about the Abfilme Certainty, or Uncertainty of Cheffian Faith, His wicked Doctrin, in that Point, oblig'd me to write a whole Treatife formerly in Vindication of Christia- * Faith vindinity from fuch an Intolerable Scandal; which I apply'd, cated from pof. in the close of it, against himself and De. Tillorfon. Had bood. helet you know this, he prudently forefaw your Zeal for Christianity (your best Concern) would have given Your just prejudice against his Sommon, and the Preacher too; and the very Conceit at Ohriftians have of the Treth of their Faith, would have made you abhor a Difourse out of a Pulpit, maintaining it might possibly be Ly. As for particulars data had describening son

8. First, he talks of a Stedfastness, and a firm and well-lettled resolution to adhere to that Faith which Chrift himfelf deliver d. But, ought you not to be affur'd first that he did indeed deliver it? Or are you to adhere to it as bis, whether you are certain tis bis or no? Or is a resolution, to hold stedfastly to what you judge is the Faith of Christ, well-fettled, if that Faith of yours, the Bahs of your Spiritual Building and Ground of that Refolution. be not well-fettled it felf, but may fink into Falfe-hood? This is the true Point you are to look after; and, till you have perfect fatisfaction from him in this, wifely to consider, that Pious Talk without Solid Grounds to support their Truth, is but painting the out-fide of a Se pulcher. The tinkling cymball of a little Rhetorick and shews of much Reading, may go far with persons whom such flourishes can prevail upon to forgo their Reason; but he had but a very small respect for you, if he hop't you were so easy to be play'd upon with the wind of a little articulate avr. our web wast and aut

"S. 9. It was very possible, he says, for them to have mistaken or misremember'd what was at first deliver'd: Whom does he mean by [Them] What by [First Delivery] Does he mean the Universality of Christians in the First Age, or any succeeding one: Orthatthose Great Bodies settled in their Faith, form'd into Church-Government, and kept up to their Christian Duties by Disciplin, could thus missale or misremember the former Teaching and Practice, which was a plain matter of Fact. This is the only Tradition we ever spoke of, or went a bout to defend. None doubts, but that, when some single Apossle was Preaching in some places at first, the Thoughts of the Hearers were as yet raw, and the things that were told them were so strange, that they did not immediately sink deep into the Conceptions of

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the Generality. But, it was otherwise, when in tract of time that Doctrin was farther spread, more often inculeated, and more clearly explain'd; and well-inftructed Pastours constituted, to Teach it more expressly, and put them forwards to practife it. He mistake then and mifreprefents the whole nature of Our Tradition; and by antedating it, fights against it, before it could heve a Being. And as this Errour runs through all his Discourses, and weak Inferences out of Scripture; for the laying it open once for all, is a full confutation of them all at once. Add, that he never consider'd whether, when those several Churches Err'd, or were in haand to Err, they did fo by following even that particular Tradition, or Preaching of fuch or fuch an Apofle: or, whether they came to err by deferting it. If the Later, the Tradition was not faulty, but They who Deferted it : Yet, how different foever thefe two Points are, the one making for that particular Tradition, the other against it, he never thinks of distinguishing them, or letting the Reader know when the Tradition was in fault. and when the Persons; but runs on in common words. as if he had no Defign, or determinate prospect whither he was going. I am fure it is not at all towards the true Question, nor against Us, ment to the sold derevel

2. 10. But, tho all his Reflexions from the several pieces of Scripture are quite besides the purpose, yet his Candid and Solid way of managing his own Mistakes, and how he wire-draws every thing to make it seem sit, deserves our particular observation. He tells us, speaking of the Church of County, that They (which signifies the whole Church) had like to have lost all their Faith; whereas the Text only sayes [Some among you.] And, is to such a wonder that some among many thould hap to be impersectly instructed, samastical or refracto-

P. 5

ry fotheir Beachers. But his Partiality is most remark. able. When he was force to be beholding to the Churches Testimony of Destrine (which is our Tradition) to aber the Scripture; he * could tell us then, This is very differen from the Cufe of particular Perfens in Some Churches who might mistake or forget what was haught; but (faves he) -the Churches themselves could not agree to approve on Errow in the Goffel contratt to the faith neliber's to them. So that there it was a very different Cofe: but here it feems the Cafe is not different at all but the very fame. Fon [Same among Tou] are enlared to fignify that Church it felf and whereas the only Point those Some deny'd was The Resurrection of the Dead to let you fee how utterly infignificant a thing Traditionis that cando no good aball, he extends it to fignify [All their Faith hoping I suppose any thing would pass upon won to invere shalle out of a Pulpit: Tis told you there, All's Gods Wood, and he prefumes you will be for Civil to God Almighty, and fo Kind to himself as to accept it for Such and fivellow it for Pure Truth

p. 10, 11.

p. 11.

festimony of every christian Church did show the Goneurrence of all the Apostus; as to the Doctine contain d in
the several Gospels. For then, I hope, they may be
able to show to the mext Age (and so sorwards) the concurrent Dodrine of the First, which establishes the Original of our Tradition to be Absolutely Certain. He discourses well (prince) and he ends better; That the Menmony of the Apostus Dostrin was so feelt in their Minds,
that it was in effect the Cansent of all the Spottes who
have taught them. And yet better; That the concurrent
Testimony of all the Apostolical Churches could not let
them agree to approve an Errour in the Gospels; contrary
to the Faith Deliver Do them: This is very extraordinary

ordinary kind and no less folid. For, I. these Words, Could not acree to approve a contrary Doctrine I makes their Testimony Jufallible. 2. This discourse makes the acceptation of the Truth of the Gospels, that is of their Sense, depend on Unwritten Tradition 3. We cannot doubt but that Docfrine was Full as fresh in their Memaries, when they were grown Older, and were to transmit it to the next Age after the Apostles decease, as it was before; unless they lost the Memory of it, by discoursing of it more while they taught it to others, &c by Practifing it longer themselves. 4. As little can it be doubted but the Doctrine and Practife of the First Age, was as Fresh in the minds of the Second Age, fince they Led their Christian Lives by it; for it was Equally Intelligible, and of Equal Concern still to them to Learn and Teach it, as it was to the First. Lastly, That this being fo, the Testimony of that Body, even now adays, that adheres to Tradition, * is in effect, the Confent of all the Apostles that taught it at First. Observe, Gentlemen, that this is the only time Dr. St. has so much as touch't upon Qur Tradition; and that he is so far from impugning or confuting it, that he, in some part directly, in others by necessary Consequence, acknowledges it's force, and strongly abets it. But, it was not out of good will; he was intent in that place upon making good the Truth of the Gofpels; and, affoon as he has made use of it to serve a present turn, he immediately discards it as good for little or nothing, or nothing to the particular purpose he had lately allow'd, the Testifying Christs Doctrine. S. 1.2. For the very next page, he reckons up three things. for which, The common Tradition of the Apastolical Churches were useful after the Decease of the Apostles. But not a word of their Ufefuluefs to Testify to others what they had learnt from those Masters of Christianity. No sooner were

* P. 11.

P. 12.

the

the Apostles dead, and that first Age had, by their concurrent Testimony of the Dodrine they had receiv'd from them, given credit to the Truth of the Written Golpels. but immediately the whole Christian World had lost their Memory of that Doctrine on a fudden, and the Grace to preferve and propagate it. One would think by this wild Discourse of his, that both Common Natural parts. and all degrees of Ordinary Honesty had been preserved to them miraculcusly thitherto, meerly to recommend the Truth of the Gospels: and, that assoon as that was done, and the Apostles were dead, the Author of Nature and Grace suspended or rather subtracted for ever all his Influence. & left them a Tabula rafa (without either Memory or Goodness) to learn their Faith anew out of Scripture.

§. 13. And, hence it is that he rallies upon Univerfal Testimony or Tradition as if it were some sleight flory of a few Tatling Goffips, or of those who heard what some say, that others told them, who had it from such &c. Whereas had he faid as he ought to have faid, What the whole First Age of Christians witnest to the next Age. that They had heard, seen, and practic't; and the whole next Age to the Third, and fo forwards, with an Obligation still to transmit it, Equal to that the First Age bad to believe it, there had been no place left for his ridiculous Raillery. But his constant Method is this : he endeavours to put you out of conceit with Tradition, by concealing every thing that might give you a true Conceit what Tradition is, and what we mean by it.

9. 14. The Argument or Instance he brings to prove that the Authority of Tradition was mightily sunk in the Second Century, is, if possible, ten thousand times worse, One would verily think, from those big words, he would prove that All the Christians of the First Age had con-

fpir'd to tell a Ly to the Second, concerning Christ's Doctrin.

P. 13.

P. 14.

Doctrin. But, this mountainous Expectation came off with a poor little mouse, the relation of one fingle man, Papias, of what an Apostle had told him; which he being a good honest Soul, gain'd credit with diverse. Tho'. as for his wit, Dr. St's Author, Eulebius, tells us be was a man of a mean capacity, and scarce understood the meaning of what was spoken. I wonder the Dr. blush't not to put fuch a Slur upon his Auditory, as to compare the Publick Authority of the whole Christian World, and the Universal Testimony of God's Church, to the private flory of one weak man; or to pretend hence that if he were mistaken, the Authority of Tradition mightily finks and fails; whereas tis only his own Credit that falls into that difaster by making such a senseless Argument. Yet, this is the best, and, as far as I can find, the only one he has brought to prove directly the First Age of Christians had bely'd Christ's Doctrin to the Second; and that because one man of a mean Capacity mistook, we may stand in doubt of our Affurance whether all the Learneder Faithfull, nay all the Pastours and Bishops in the Church, had Capacity enough to know an open matter of Fact, viz, what had been taught and practis'd publickly every day by a World of Fore fathers, or the Integrity not to deceive us.

S. 15. Of the same stamp is his alledging that St. Luke's reason why he writ his Gospel, was to give Theophilus Certainty of those things wherein he had been infirmited. The Subject of our Enquiry is about the High Points of Christian Belief: Does the Dr. think then that Theophilus was not a Christian, or had no Certain Knowledg of his Faith, ere St. Luke writ? Or, that the Apostes did not instruct people in those Main Articles? Or that St. Luke's Writing those Points in short (for those Points we speak of take up a very inconsiderable part of

P. 14.

his Gofpel) could make him know it better, and with more Certainty than their Preaching it at large ! With That Senfe can any of this be pretended? The Apoftles did Miracles to attell their Doctrin: Did St. Luke, do amy to atteff the True Sense of all he writ in those Points? Again, what did his Gofpel contain? Only those Dog. matical Points controverted from time to time between the Sons of the Church, and her Deferters; of which, and none but which, we fpeak? Alas! these are the least part of his Gospel, and make but a small appearance in it. He relates our Saviour's Genealogy, Temptation, Fasting, Miracles, Parables, his fending his Apostles and Disciples, his Exhortations to Repentance and good Life, the Manner of his Entring into Ferulalem, his Instituting the Last Supper, the particulars of his being apprehended, accused, condemn'd, and Crucify'd. Laftly, his Burial, Refurrection, Apparitions and Alcention. These are laid out in that Gospel at large, together with many excellent fayings of our Bleffed Saviour related verbatim. And Thefe, as they were never pretended by us to be the Object of Tradition; fo, tho spoken of frequently (and perhaps variously) amongst Christians, were Impossible ever to be perfectly remember'd by the Generality, unless put in a Book; and therefore St. Luke gives Theaphilus (and others) the Certain and particular knowledge of all thefe Paffages by Writing : And Dr. St. confesses the fame (p. 17.) and that his aym and Intention was to give an Account of the Life and Aftions of Christ, but not a word that his Writing was to give Theophilus Certainty or a Clearer Knowledge of those Main Articles, to ascertain which Tradition is pretended by us to be the most proper Means.

6. 16. Now let's fee how many nororious prevarications and faults he has fallen into in this one Instance.

1. Our whole Controverly is about the Certainty of those fublime Points of Christian Faith; which he conceals, and confounds them with a multitude of particular Paffages. 2. Heintimates our Tradition is to ascertain all that's contain'd in St. Luke's Gospel. Whereas, he knows well, we rely upon no Tradition but whats in some degree Practical, which those Particulars are not; unless it be those, of which we keep Anniverfary Solemnities. 2. He is fo angry at Tradition, that he pretends the very Oral Tradition or Preaching of the Gospel by the Apostles, needed something to strengthen and confirm it. Lastly, he makes our Tradition to begin with the first Preaching of the Apostles : whereas, it dates it's Original from the first Age of Christianity; already perfectly instructed by them, during all their Lives, and fettled into Ecclefiaftical Order and Discipline at their Decease.

and affirms, That the Writings of the Apostles, when Matters of Doctrin came to be contested, were the Infallible Rule whereby they were to judge which was the true and genuin Doctrin of Christ; and, which is yet better, that They were intended by the Holy Ghost, to be a standing Rule, whereby the Church was to judge which was the true and genuin Doctrine of Christ. I am glad with all my heart, to hear him speak of the Church being a Judge of Controverses; or, that he allows Her any hand in ascertaining and proposing Faith. I ever underflood him hitherto, That every fober Enquirer was to judge of the sense of Scripture for himself; That it was plain to him even in the highest Points; and, that if, in any contested or dubious Articles, the Letter of Scri- Answer to the pture did not declare it explicitly, his lober Enquirer Catholic Let-

6. 17. He feems at length to come neerer the Point.

pag. 15.

* Dr. St's could *by parity of Reason render any Implicit Point

Explicit, * without the Church's Delp ; tho this was Second Let-.re 4, ret and or broughe Que Sense (which She had another

the most difficult Task as to the penetrating the Sense of Scripture that is possible, and far beyond the under-flanding what's there Explainty. He rold us roo in his fecond Letter, p. 31, 32. that, because there is no Infallible Judge - every man is to Judge for himfelf; and this by Scripture, his Rule. But, here the cale is alter'd, and the Church is to judge of Christ's Doctrin by Scripture. I can allow honest Retractions without upbraiding them; and am contented that the Church flould judge by Scripture both when She is to Edify Her Children, and in contests with Hereticks, as to all those Points contain'd there; and, I think the only difficulty in that particular is, By what means She came to be Alfolntely-certain of it's Senfe. Let him add then but one word more, and fay that by the Letter of Scripture She fo judg'd of Faith, that She could not be in an Errour, or miliaken att the while, and then Christian Faith is Absolutely Certain, and my greatest care is over. And, if he does not That, what is the future Church, after the Apostles Deaths, the berret for Scripture's being an Infallible Rule, if She and Her Children partake not the Benefit of that Infallibility fome way or other, by being perfectly fecur'd from Erring in Faith? Is it not all one as to the intent of knowing affuredly we have the Faith the by Christ, whether we have an Infallible Rule or no. It, when we have done our best, we may still stray from Her Faith? Or, why is not a Rule that is not Absolutely Cortain, to I have Absolute Certainty I am directed by it, as good for that purpole, as an Abio-lutely Certain Rule with he Abiolite Certainty that I do indeed to according to it. To feak to his propolition Whether the Church and the Faithful in Contells. with Herench avail of Her felf of Scripture's Letter, to gam Absolute-Germany of it's Sense, in those main Tenots; or brought the Sense (which She had another way)

way) along with ber, shall be decided if the pleases, by

St. Austin, whom he cites here, p. 16. See p. 15.

6, 18. He will prove Scripture a Rule from the general Reason of it's Writing; and prove this general Reafon from a Testimony of Ireneus, which speaks of the Gospel as abstracted from being Preach't and Written; and who doubts but as fuch it is infallibly true. He feems to build much upon the Words [That it might he a Foundation and Pillar of our Faith.] Be it what it will in it felf, the Point is, How does it Build Faith in us? By it's meer Letter, descanted upon by private Judgments, or, interpreted by the Church? The Later he denies; the Former, all our most earnest Pressing and Intreating could never bring him, nor his Reflecter to go about to make out; and he waves it totally through this whole Sermon. Let him then but shew that he has Absolute-Certainty of Scripture's Sense, in those Tenets of Christian-Faith, by any Method his Principles will allow him, and his Sermon should have past forme without Controul. That's the main Point, whereas all here is quite befides it. As for those Words from S. Ironaus he could have quoted the very fame words (in a manner) from a better Author (eyen the Holy Scripture) calling the Church the Pillar and Ground of Truth; but that he tilet not the Application of them to the Church. It feems he can neglect his Rule, and make no more reckoning of it than he did of the Oral Tradition, or Preaching of the Apostles, when it stands in his way, of comes cross to his purpole.

9. 19. It has been manifested above, that his Discours p. 16, 17. 80. es from the writing of the Gospels and Epiftles are all guilty of the same Fault, and Antedate our Tradition: and his Inferences thouse, as levell'd against our Tenet, are weaker than Weter. He makes Tradition any thing

what he pleases, and will have it do every thing, tho' it was never intended for it, nor ever pretended by us it was able to do it. One while it must bring down the *De-* p. 19. * ibid. crees of Councils. Another while it must convey * long Disputes about divers Points; and the resolution of them: and this Totidem Verbis, otherwife the Apostles Sense might have been loft. It must secure people from being * remov'd from Christ's Gospel to another : whereas no man ever held that the Galatians were remov'd from Christ's Gospel by following even the particular Tradition or Preaching of that Apostle; nor that any particular Men, nay Churches, might not be remov'd from it even into Heathenism, or Judaism, if they deserted it. He expects too, it should fecure men from * danger of * p. 21. being Deceiv d; whereas, supposing them once well-Infructed in Faith (and 'tis suppos'd to our Tradition the *See above Church was fo) tis * felf-evident they can never be deceiv'd while they hold to that Certain Rule ; be-5. 5. Note 5. cause that is to hold the same they were instructed in at first. But if all were not well instructed at first, as 'tis impossible they should, then they might be deceiv'd, either by deferting Tradition, or even by holding to fuch a Tradition: if, for want of perfect Instruction in that raw and unfettled state of Christianity, that which they held at first was not perfectly Christ's Doctrine. he would have it keep even Hereticks from * Defection, * Ibid. Hypocrifie, Lying and Deceiving : which were a rare Tradition indeed, to do fuch Kindnesses, and work such good Effects upon those who had deserted it, and would not make use of it; at least, he would have it keep People from Weakness and Folly; which the Common Affistances of Nature and Grace will do, after the Genera-

lity is well fettled in that Doctrine. For, when all the

Question is, What the Apostles preach't, 'tis a Madness and

and Folly both to believe some sew men, before the Universal Testimony of the Christian Church. But he will have Tradition still do all the Mischies imaginable, and Writing do all the Good; forgetting, I suppose, that there are some things in St. Paul's Writings, * which the Un-*2 Pet.3.16. learned and Unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. All this while, What is this to the Tradition we affert, which begun afterwards?

* P. 22.

§. 20. From these impertinent Premises, he infers as impertinent a Conclusion, viz. That, * what was deliver'd in Scripture contains a compleat Rule of the true and genuin Faith, as it was at first deliver'd to the Church. Now, that what's fignify'd by Scripture is the same the Apofiles fignify'd by their Preaching, is plain Sense, and never deny'd; and, so he needed not have made all this clutter to prove it. But plain sense will do him no service, whose best play 'tis to blunder and confound every thing: let us fee then what it is that will. His first words [What they have therein delivered] can mean nothing but the Sense of Scripture; for that is the thing fignify'd or deliver'd by the Letter; and both fides confess, that the Sense of Scripture is Christ's Faith. If then we spell his Words together, they plainly amount to this, That Christ's Faith contains a compleat Rule of the true and genuin Faith, as it was deliver'd at first to the Church, that is, Faith it self contains a compleat Rule to it's self. Make fence of this who can. The best I can make of it is, That the Conclusion keeps decorum with the Premises; and that he has mighty well imploy'd his Labour to keep fuch a huge Pother to infer fuch a worthy Point.

of our Writers, but shall come to his * Second Reason, drawn from the notorious Uncertainty of meer Tradition; and that never was any trial made of it but it faild, even

* P. 23.

when it had the greatest Advantages. Expect Gentlemen. by those high and mighty Words, he will bring most Convincing Arguments, to prove that the Universal Testimory of the Church in delivering down those high Points of Faith is notoriously Uncertain, and fail'd in every Age, nay, the very First, for then it had the Greatest Advantages ; the Christians having then fresh Me. mories, and being then Infallible, fince they could not agree to approve falle Doctrin, as himfelf told us p. 11. 12. For my part I am of his mind, and never knew a ny other Tradition have Advantages comparable to what Christian Tradition had for transmitting the Doctrine of Faith; and if he lets you know what those Advantages of Christian Tradition were, and shews them unable to oblige the Church to convey Christ's Doctrin down, he will gain his Point : But, if he prevaricates from this necessary Duty, he abuses you with fine Luke-warm Words to no purpose. I do affure you before hand, tho'he talks here of Advantages, he has not in his whole Sermon mention'd, much less ingenuously inform'd you of any one Advantage Christian Tradition has; but industriously conceal'd every particular that gives it force. Yet, who fees not that without doing this, 'tis impossible to implay it, or deal fairly with his Auditory; for how should you judge of the Compari-Son, without a clear fight of the things Compar'd?

§. 22. He did very prudently, not to infift on the failing of Tradition in the Law of Nature; For 1. He must have shewn It fail'd them, and not They fail'd It by deferting it; which could onlybe done by proving that had they continu'd to follow it, they could have stray'd into Polytheism; which he can never do, it being evidently impossible. 2. That, to make good the Parallel, he must have prov'd it had as Ample an Original (which

Ibid.

gives a valt force to Testifying Authority) as Christian Tradition had; which is equally impossible; for it had for its Source but one fingle man, Adam. 3. That there were not more powerful Motives, nor greater Affistances of Grace to continue the Christian Doctrine under the Law of Grace, than there were under that most imperfeet Law of Nature; nor more exact Discipline in the Church of Christ, than there was in that loofe State: which had been hard Points, and altogether impossible even to attempt with any shew of Reason. He did very wisely too to Wave the Opinion of the Millenaries, the time of Effer and the Communicating of Infants. For he both knows that every Apostolical Tradition (had this last been suppos'd such) is not necessarily an Article of Faith: as also that none of these (nor yet their contrary) was a Point of Christian Doctrine Preach't and Settled unanimoully over the World by the Apostles. He made account he had a better game to play, by thewing how * Tradition fail'd in delivering down the Apo- *P. 23, 24, files Creed. But he might, had he pleas'd, as well have left out That us the Others; for * none of the Explainers * See my third of Tradition ever held or faid it was to bring down Set Catholick Let-Form of Words, which required application of Memory and Repetition of them in Order; but only the Senfe of the First Age (which was Christ's true Faith) instill'd after a connatural way by Education; and apt to be expreft in different Words, according to different Circumommandments, as mule asto

ibid.

1.29. Weredt granted him, That * things Written (luppoling the Letter could be prov'd to be still continu'd Absolutely Certain) had the Advantage, as to the Certain: ty of Conveyance, above things meerly committed to Memary and Tradition; yet he is where he was. The Point between us still thicks, that is, Whether meer Words,

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expressing in short such sublime spiritual Teners, as are most of the chief Articles of Christian Religion, are fo Clear to private Judgments, nay, to All (even the Vulgar) that are looking for Faith, that they can have that perfect Assurance of their true Sense, as to build that Never-to-be-Alter'd Affent, call'd Faith, upon their understanding them. This is the summ of our difficulty. this is what we most infift upon, and are perpetually pressing him to shew the security of the Method he takes to give us this Certainty: I do not mean the Certainty of the Letter (about which he keeps fuch ado) but of the fense of it in such Points, if he thinks any one of them fornecessary, that the Generality cannot be sav'd without the knowledge of it. This is it, which most imports you to know, if you value the having fuch Grounds for your faith, as ought in true reason to perswade you'tis true that it was Taught by Christ, or that you are not perhaps dociend, and in an Errour all this while. But, not one word of this in the whole Sermon. * He argues from God's making choice of Writing, when he deliver'd the Ten Commandments. What means he, or how can he apply this to our Question? Are the Ten Commandments, which are plain honest Nature, of as Deep and Mysterious a Sense, as the high Points we speak of? Are they so hard to be understood, that Writing is not a clear Conveyer of God's Sense in such Matters? Does he hear a great part of the World at variance about the Meaning of the Ten Commandments, as multitudes of Hereticks have been Wrangling with the Church ever fince Christ's time, about the Sense of Scripture in those Dogmatical Points? Were the Texts which contain those Points as plain to all Mankind as the Ten Commandments are, or as are generally the Historical and Moral parts of Scripture, I should frankly declare, that Scripture

P. 16.

Scripture might in that Supposition be a Rule of Faith, es so the Points contained in it, and that there would be no need of the Church for our fimply believing, but only to confirm our faith, explain it more throughly, when any part of it, imply'd in some main Point, is deny'd: apply it to our Confeiences by her Preaching, and keep us up to the Doctrin it delivers by her Government and Discipline. So that our Controversy-Preacher, who has never hit the Point hitherto, doubly milles it here in his representing Tradition, as held by us needful to supply the defect of Clearness in Moral passages, that are plain enough of themselves; and that 'tisso bring down Set-Forms of Words, (which is not its butiness) whatever it be these Words express And this hows his Mistake in his * Second Proof; wiz the restoring the Knowledge of the Law Written by a Written Book : which was a Way most Proper for what End. Whence, for the same Reason, there were any deviation from the Christian Destries. which, as contradiffinguish't to that other, was mid in the Living Tables of the Dearts of the Faithful, the best Way of preferring or refloring That, was by the Sence writ in the beart of the Church at first by the Preaching of the Apostles, and continued ever since in the manner we have describid and prov'd.

it. 24. But, The Dr. is got into a Track of millaking, and he cannot get out of it. He brings for his Third Argument our B. Savieur sadvice to the first to fearch the disciplines. The business was to know whether he was the true Masses; and the Prophecies relating to the Masses of Masses; and therefore proportion do the Understanding of the Searchers; and plain enough to they apply d but Industry & Diligence to industry out Are your Myseries of Christian Faith such One Must weak understandings therefore

* P. 27

23.2

prefume to penetrate the Meaning of the Scripture in Texts of to deep a Senfe as those Milleries are, because the Tews were exhorted to do it, in a matter within the Sphere of their Capacity? Again, The Tradition of the Tews was very ftrong, that a Melfras should come ; but that This was the Perfor, there was no Tradition at all. This was therefore either to be made known by his Mis racles done to accept it, or to be found out by the apply. ing of diverse particulars to Him, and by seeing they all concurr'd in him. And did ever any of us pretend, that Tradition was to bring down fuch particulars & If he fays we did, he must shew where ! If he confesses we did non he must confess withat his Text and Discourse here is nothing to the purpole. He turns it of from the Admonition of fearthing the Scriptures to know the true Meffin to the knowing whether he were a Temporal Prince whereas the Tradition of his Kingdom's being purely Spiritual, was neither Owiverfully held, taught, nor del ver'd at first by the First Founders of that Law, nor sended in the hearts of the Synagogue, or the Universality of the Jews in the beginning, as Christ's Doctrin was by the unanimous Preaching of the Apolites in the hearts of fuch a numerous Multitude as was the Christian Church of the First Age. Which being evidently for What res-Son was there our Saviour should refer them to fuch a flight; or rather no Tradition, and not to the Written Prophecies, in which he was foretold ? Or, What confequence can be drawn hence to the prejudice of Christian Tradition which, and which only, we defend, and which as was fitting) is fo ftrough supported, that it is impossible to find a Parallel to equal or come night. And unless this bedone, all his Arguments against it stand thus, A Leffer Force cannot do an Effett therefore a Greater cames. An odd piece of Logick, but fuitable to all the reft. 5. 25. His

• 6 25. His Fourth Reason represents Tradition to be meerly Verbal, and not Practical. That it (alone) is to bring down particular Matters of Fact, or Historical paffages ? nay, the Speculative Whimfies of the old Heathen Phylosophers. None of which was ever pretended; and, fo, all his Discourse runs upon his old and ofterepeated

Errour in the true meaning of Tradition,

\$. 26. The Reasons he gives for the Certainty of the Books of Scripture, we allow to a Tittle ; and we add to them One, over and above, which is better than them all; viz. the Obligation and Gare of the Church; which, as She ever held the Scriptures to contain the fame Doctrin which was preach't to Her at first by Christ's Order, and that it was a most incomparable instrument for the Edification of her Children the Abetment of Faith the Salvation of Mankind, nay, an Instruction to Her Self too in thousands of most excellent most useful and most enlightning passages: lo She could not but look upon Her Self as most highly oblig'd to preferve the Letter from any material Alteration; and yet more particularly, in case any Hereticks went about to corrupt it in any Texts (nay, Goma's or Pointings) that concerned the main Articles of Christianity, which they sometimes attempted; the Doctrin of Christ in her Breast, could easily direct them to set the Text right again, and that with Absolute Certainty. Nor does any say, or so much as suppose any Book of Scripture is indeed loft, as he hints, p. 29. only, upon his faying. That," the Scripture we have now, contains all the Divine Revelations; I us'd the right of a Disputant, and Catholic Letput him to make good what he fays, and to prove he has ter, p. 36. the Absolute Certainty he pretended to, that no Book was loft, without which he could have no fuch Certainty those pieces of Scripture we have now, did contain All the Divine Revelations; which, by his Grounds, deny-

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ing any Certainty but what might admit of Desir ; t

P. 30.

9:17. Not ust at all south of the influence of Divine Grace, or of the Internal Satisfuction which good Souls who are already Faithful, for as St. Thomas of Adult cites by him expresses himself, France the France of Fairly by which they have a Plot Judghten of those things which are arrecable to that werthe receive concerning Scripture and Christ's Doctrin or that they confirm then there than Demonstration Hoes. Arguments have the Nature of Preliminaries to Faith of Searches after it ! but the Invard Surisfaction that that Heavenly Doctrin rectifies and but rifles the Soul, and levels it directly towards the Attalianient of it's last Blissful End, has the nature of a kind of Experience; and, as it were, Possession and Employment of what Humane Arguments, previous to Faith, had been toking after, and contending of 1 Imposte, Gentlemen, by a thew of Prety to reft appay'd with any flight mes for that falls thort of concluding, and breed in you a prejudice against the necessity of his producing any fuch Pulboud. But he is as much out of the Way here as h was in all the rest . For, not with transling God's brate, and this internal Satisfaction, which is Proper to good South Who are Bettevers already, the Church and her Pations must be furnith'd with folid and mantweather Reasons to fails the perfectly ringle both of the lower and mon active capacity, who are looking after Fairh, that the poction she projects was rangin by Christ; and to some and defend its stricts, in that particular against the mon fubtile Advertaries; which climiot be done, titles the Restons which we, as Controvertiffs, bring, let it above posibility of Patswood, that Christ ranghe it. We

We cannot put God's Grace and our Internal Sarisfaction into Syllogifias when we are disputing. Nor does God intend by His Grace to prejudice the true Nature Himfelf has given us, which is Reason ; but to perfect and elevate it. Tis against Reason, that in Preliminaries to Faith, which are the Objects of Natural Realon . those Who are capable to penetrate the force of realons, should affect beyond the Motive; for, as far as it is beyond the Motive, tis without any Motive : that is, without any Realon: and, therefore (whatever often happens through the Imperfection of Creatures) fuch an Irrational Affent could never have been intended by God. Whence, as it belongs to infinite Goodness to give those who sincerely feek for Truth, the Grace to embrace it; fo it belongs to Infinite Wisdom to lay fuch means to arrive at Truth, (that is, in our case, such a Rale of Faith) as both evince I's Trach to those who are capable, according to the most exact Methods of True Reafon; and withat perfectby * fecure those from Errour who follow that Rule, let * See Errow them be as Weak as they will. If then we are bound to Non-plus, embrace Christian Faith as a Cruth, and profess it to be P. 134,135. to it thuff be indeed fuch ; and therefore the Grounds left us by God must be of that nature, as to prove or conchide it to be fuch : and, if Dr. St. have no fuch Grounds that what he holds is really Christ's Doctrin, he ought not to handle or preach Controverse: since he must beceffarily differace and weaken Christian Faith, when he is to credit and establish it. Nay, he ought not to pretend he has that most firm, and most firongly-supported Affent, call'd faffe, which depends necessarily on the Certainty that it was taught by Christ, but candidly Vield he has Dointon only in that Point; not an Whalte-Tible Bettef it is True, but only a good Conceit of Prope that it is fo, or may be fo : Too weak a Prop to fulfain

it's Truth, as it leans on Christ or his Apostles, having taught it; or to settle the Basis of all our Spiritual Life.

1. 28. And now let's apply this Difcourse to his Ground or Rule, by means of which he is to be thus affurd, or able to affure You of the Truth of those Controverted Points, which you hear so warmly disputed in the world. and which it fo much imports you to be fatisfy'd in Tis Scripture's Letter (in Texts that are thought to relate to those Points) as understood or interpreted by Himfelf, or any other Private Judgment. What he has then to do, is to make out with Absolute Certainty, that this Method of arriving at the Knowledge of Christ's True Doctrin, as to those Points, cannot be Deceitful and Erroneous. Otherwise, 'tis unavoidable, his Faith, and all Christian Faith, no better grounded, may be False, and by confequence, is not True. He will tell you Twenty fine Stories, and give you many pretty words of it's being Sufficiently Certain, Morally Certain, that it has fuch Allirance as men accept for other matters, &c. But ask him fmartly and closely, if any of these Certainties or Afferances are Impossible to be False, and he must not nor will deny it : for, should he fay it, he must pretend he could not be deceived in his understanding those Texts right, which he could not do without professing Infallibility in that particular. Observe, I befeech you, where the stress of the whole Question lyes. 'Tis in this, Whether this Ground or Method of his to be affur'd of Faith. is able to prove it to have been truly and indeed taught by Christ, so as it was not possible it should be otherwise. By this Test, if you examin the very good Grounds for the Certainty of his Protestant Faith, which he promises you here in his Preface, you will find evidently he only gives you very good Words instead of very good Grounds; and that, whatever he produces, whether he quotes or argues, he

he will never vouch them to be fo Certain, but Deceit and Errour may possibly confift with them. He will complain, that tis an unreasonable expectation, because the nature of the things will not bear it. And what's this, but to tell you in other terms, that there neither is any Absolute Certainty of Faith, nor can be any : which bids fair for Atheisin, unless Interest satisfies the Will, and by it the Reason. By his speaking there of the main Points in Controversie between as, I perceive he is running from the whole business in hand, and feeking to shelter himself, and hide his Head in a Wilderness. But he shall not shift the Question thus, and fall to ramble into endless Difputes. Himself confest (Second Letter, p. 20.) our Queftion was about the General Grounds of our Faith, and not the particular Certainty as to this or that Doctrin, and Tjoyn'd iffue with him upon the fame. To run to particular points while That's a fettling, is to put the Condufions before the Premises; and, to go about to afcertain things depending intirely on a Method or Rule, without afcertaining that Method or Rule first, is to begin at the wrong end, and make the Cart draw the Horfe.

alledges that Father (p. 16.) whose Testimony says only, That the Gospels are to be look't upon as Christ's own Hand-writing, and that he directed the order and manner of the Evangelist's Westeing; which only signifies they were divinely inspired in both which more denies; nor has This any Instuence upon the Point in hand. He could have quoted you other places out of Him, if he had pleas'd, which come up to it fully; and I shall supply his backwardness with doing it my self. Quarendial delication for (*Gys that Learned and Holy Father)

dubitatio, &c. (* fays that Learned and Holy Father) * Lib. 1. Gen.
The Doubt of Enquiry ought not to exceed the Bounds of ad Lit. ImperCatholick Faith. And, because many Hereticks use to draw feet. cap. 1.

the Expelition of the Divine Scriptures to their own Opio nion, which is against the Faith of the Catholick Disciplin, therefore - Ante trastationem bujus Libro Catholica Fides explicanda elt. Before the handling this Book, the Catholick faith is to be explained. Where Dr. St's Sober Enguirer is curb'd and restrain'd in his licentions Search of his Faith in Scripture, by the Catholick Faith. had (it feems) fome other way ; for, were his Faith to be had merly by fearching Scripture for it, with what fense ought he to be restrain'd, while he was in the Way to Faith : To reftrain one who is in the right Way, is to hinder him from going right, or perhaps to put him ont of his Way. Again, Tho'those Heretical Opinions were both against the true Sense of Scripture, and against Tradition too; yet, had he held Scripture the Rule, he should rather have faid they were against the true figuir fication of Scripture's Letter, than against the Faith of the Catholiek Discipline. Besides, if Catholiek Faith was to be explain'd before they came to handle Scripture, how was Scripture the Rule for all to come to Faith. When as Faith was to be had (nay, well understood by the Explanation of it antecedently, left they might otherwise fall into Herefie ? And, in another place, speaking of a falle Pointing of the Letter, made by the Arians, to abet their Herefie, he confutes them thus ; * (Sed bec-But this is to be refuted by the Rute of Faith, by which we are instructed before hand in the Equality of the Trinity. Had this Rule of Faith been held by him to be the Letter of Scripture, he would have had recourse to some exacter Copy, correcting their faulty one; and, to have born up fill to that Rale: But 'tis evident he does not thus. He makes then the Soufe of the Church or Tradition the Rule, both to know our Faith, and alfo to correct the faultiness of the Letter. Whether this fixes better with

* De Doll Chrift. 1. 3. with the Drs. Principles or ours, is left to your felves or any man of reason to judg and determine.

9. 30. Thus comes off this famous Sermon which makes fuch a noise, for a Confutation of the Traditionary Doctrin. The Sum of it is, r. The Dr. takes no notice of the main Question betwixt us, which is about the Absolute-Certainty that our Faith is Truly Christian or taught by Christ, nor attempts to shew his is thus Certain but Preaches to you Stedfastness and a well-fetled Refolution to continue in it, yet avoids the giving you any Grounds to make you Stedfast and Well-setled in that resolution. 2. He conceals every Advantage Christian Tradition has, or is pretended to have; that is, he would perswade you to Hate it, before you See it, and to compare it to Scripture before you know what kind of thing is: which is yet worse, he shews you another thing for It, and through all his Discourse pretends 'tis It, which is nothing at all to It, but utterly unlike It; viz. Particular Traditions, both before and after that Univerfal Tradition (only which we defend) was fetled. 3. He fixes a false date upon the beginning of the Tradition we speak of that the vast source of it, which (with the Circumftances annext) was able to continue the Current strong, and the Derivation of Christ's Doctrin both Certain and Perpetual, might not be reflected on. To deform it the more, he makes it meerl Werbal, as if it were nothing but the telling some dry story, by furpreffing it's Practicalness, in which confifts it's chiefest Vertue. 4. He hides from your consideration all the most Incomparable, and most Powerful Motives which enforce its Continuance, and oblige the Church never to forfake the first deliver'd Doctrin. 5. He never regards, even in those Particular Traditions, whether they fail'd the Persons, or the Persons fail'd Them; but supposes 1

fupposes sail the Tradition was in all obefault, without attempting to thew it. 6. He would have you imaginthe Church in the first Age (confishing of Pastors and People) Jost all their Memory and Grace too, asson as ex ver the Apolles were dead, left it should be held Able and Willing to testify Christ's Doctrine to the Next Age, which by Parity would Establish it is Rule for all fucceeding Ages to the End of the World 7. He mingles known Opinions, and which he holds bimfelf not to have been Universally deliver dat first with Points which we All hold to have been first deliver'd. Then, as to the Matter of Object of Tradition, Which, and only which we pretend it is to bring down with ablor lute Certainty, and deliver Clearly fuiz, the Doematical or Controverted Articles of Christian Faith, which are Practical) he never mentions it at all with any diffinction, but tumbles and confounds it with all things imaginable for which it was never pretended : and puts mon Tradition a hundred abus'd tasks as never thought of by us, to impraper, & oft eines impossible in themselves? As the deriving down the Ten Commandments Greeds Decrees of Councils, fet Forms of Words, an Infinity of particular parliages not at all Practical, may, whole Es willes and Golpels, Schemes of Doctrin raught by Heave then Philosophers Messages which use to be font by Jone Letters; Hiftorical Natrations or Actions; and in a word, every thing he could invent but the right one poiz. Those Controvented Points of Faith) tho' it lay last before him; the very nature of Controversy, which we are about determining our Difcouries to middle Points, and nothing elfe: This is his General view of Scripture and Tradition, as to the way of conveying down matters of Faith. He means a General view, which mifrepresents and blinds your light of it in every Partice lar :

lar: In a Word, there is much of Reading, Conduct and Wit in his Sermon; but wholly misemploy'd to speak as handsomely as he could to no purpose, and to miss the whole Point in Question with a great deal of Plausibility. In which, amongst his other Great Abilities, justly acknowledg'd to be Excellent, consists his

most considerable Talent and Dexterity.

§. 31. So he ends his Sermon with good Advice to you to follow Christ's Heavenly Doctrin in your Lives and Conversations. Which, as he worthily presses upon you, fo I shall heartily pray that God would vouchfafe you his Grace to follow it. I am far from blaming His or any one's Preaching the wholfome Moral Doctrines of Christianity, and laying it home to men's Consciences: But I ought not, if concern'd, to fuffer, that, when he pretends to speak to your Understandings, and establish you in Faith, he should bubble his Auditory with forty impertinent pretences, Injurious to his candid Adversaries and to Truth, as well as to your felves; please and delude your Fancies with a great shew of his Reading, and little conjectural Reflexions tack't prettily together; and, in the mean time, fend you away empty of knowing any Ground which may render you, or any, Absolutely Certain, that what you hold is indeed Christ's Doctrin; that is, any Ground of perfect fecurity; that is, cannot but be indeed his Doctrin; without being which it ought not be held True. Whereas yet, 'tis only this Certainty which can give His or any other Sermon it's full force and Energy.

Tour Servant in Christ,

I. S.

Advertisement, The 2d. & 3d. Catholick Letters, are to be Sold by M. Turner at the Lamb in High-Holbourn.

In: In a Word, slice is much of Realing, Conductional Wise in his Sermon; but wholly mifemploy d to apeak as handromely as he could to appurpple, and to refer the whole Point in Rupplin, with a great deal of Plantonia. In which, at our it his other exert Abilities, just year, and to be exertent, confirst his most confidently. Talent and Degree is.

15. 31, 50 he eads his Sermon with good A lvice to you to follow Christ's Heavenly Doctrin in your Liver and Converterions. Which as he worthly media treen veil for first beartly play that God weed veiled you his Grace to fellow it. I am far from blaming ! or any one's Preaching the wholfome Moral Dollring of Christianity, and laying it home to men's Configurers. But I curie not, if concernid, to faller, that, when he merends to freak to your thinky and white and clabing you of Frish, he should bubbledlis Auditory with forty mertinent pretences, Injurious to his candid Adveriaries and to Truth, as well as to your felves, pleafeand delice your Fancies with a great thew or his Heading and lade conjectural Hellevions tack operation topether; and, in the mean times fend yet away empty of knowing any Ground which may render you, or cmy Abfall of Certain, that what you hold is indeed Christ's Doctrin; that is, any Ground of perfect femany; that is, counciled in indeed its Bearing without foung which it oright not be held Time. Whereas wher Sermon is full face and Energy.

Tour Levolut in Christ.

P Advertisement, The 2d & 3d Enthalick Letters, are to be Sold by M. Furner et the Lambin High Holladin.

Catholick Letter

IN

REPLY

Dr. Stillingfleet's (Pretended) ANSWER

To

About the Fortieth Part of J. S's

Eatholick Letters,

Addrest to all Impartial Readers.

By John Sergeant,

Bubliched With Allowance. "

Lordon, Printed, and fold by Matthew Turner, at the Land in High-Holborn, 1688.

Catholick Letter

V.ICES

Saffing as (Typiended) ANSWER

About the Forterb Part of J. Ss

Carpolick Actives,

Addrest to all impartial Readers.

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London, Printed and fold by Matthew Turner, at the Land in High-Holborn, 1688.

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PREFACE.

Addrest to the most Partial of Dr. Stillingsleet's Friends.

weaken this exerting (white as flather as is the Court Landston of Dr. St.) must be preportionedly Week and Exerc., nemelting

W Hen a Person is incomparably qualify'd above all others in any Particular; men use to look upon him as a Pattern in that Kind. I will not fay Dr St. has manifested himself to be such an Exemplar in every respect that can be an Ingredient of an III Controvertift. This is yet to be shewn; and Presence without Proof signifies withing: Only I may justly fear that, while you are reading my Reply. to his Answer (as he calls it) to my Catholick Letters, you may be apt to judge that I am rather framing an Idea of what Human Weaknes maintaining an insupportably-ill Cause may be obnoxious to, than giving a Just Character of his Performances; and that, 'tis Absolutely Impossible that a Man of his Parts should be Guilty of such and so many Incredible Failings. I acknowledge with all due Respect to him. his Great Endowments; and am heartily glad, in Truth's behalf, I am engag'd with an Adverfary to whom no Personal Insufficiency can be objected. Nothing could make the Victory come more Clear to the Cause I'am defending; and the more Dr St. is rais'd above the Common Levell of Writers, the more Evidently it will appear that nothing but the pure force of Truth could drive a man of his Abilities to fuch unpurallel'd Shifts and Subterfuges, to pulliate that Errour the Patro-

nage of which he had so unfortunately espous'd. Nor is it to be wonder'd at that even the best Wit in the World should be bassled while it maintains fuch a Cause: For, were it some Errour of an ordinary fize that he defended, or were the Truth which he opposes of a trivial Importance, Rhetorick and misus'd Wit might perhaps bear it down, and gain a seeming Victory over it: but when the sole Point is, whether even what we all hold to have been the Faith taught by Christ. may for ought any man living knows, be perhaps none of his; and so, a Falshood and a Lying Story; 'ris not to be imagin'd that any Tricks of Human Skill can prevail against a Point of that Sacred Concern. It belongs to the Wisdom of our Good God, to settle these things most firmly, which are of the greatest Weight; and therefore the Certainty we are to have that Christ was indeed the Author of the Faith we profes, being such an Incomparable Good, and the Basis of all our Spiritual Building, must be by far more unremovably establish, and more surely plac't above a tottering Contingency, than the frongest Pillars of this Material World; whence, all Attempts to undermine, and weaken this Certainty (which as shall be seen is the Chief Endeavour of Dr St.) must be proportionably Weak and Ruinous.

To give you a Map of his main Performances taken from his Book

in short, and prou'd upon him in this Reply.

First, Whereas 'tis the Principal Duty of a Controvertist (especially, writing about the Grounds of Faith) to justify, that is to prove Faith to be Teue; the Dr is so far from doing, or allowing the good Office to be done to Faith; that be maintains the direct contray. Nay, he will not grant so much honour to any Particular Point of Pauth (and our Whole Faith is made up of such Particulars) as to let u enjoy even his own kind of Absolute Certainty, tho that falls short of proving any thing to be above possibility of Falshood or (which is the same) True; but says over and over in perfectly equivalent terms that the Sense which himself, or any man (or Church either) has of Scripture in particular Points, may not be the True Sense of it; that is, may not be Christ's Doctrin; which if it be not, it may not be True; And is it possible that what may not be True, can at the same time by True; that is, is it possible that Truth may not be its self.

Secondly, We are writing Controversy, and consequently treating of Faith precisely according to a particular consideration belonging to

It, which is, by what way tis with Absolute Certainty derivable from Christ. This has been repeated and Eccho'd to him over and over even to Surfeit. This was the Scope and Occasion of the Conference. This is exprest in my Short Discourse against his may of baving Cereasinty of Christ's Dostrin; and clearly aim'd at in Mr G's Demonfration. Nay, this has been told him fifteen years ago in Errour Nonplust, p. 44. Where I in these plainest words thus Stated the Queftion. " It being then agreed amongst in all that what Christ and his " Apostles taught is God's Word, or his Will, and the Means to Salva-"tion; all that is to be done by us as to matters of Faith, is to know with "AbsoluteCertainty what was the first-taught Doctrin, or Christ's Sense; " and whatever can thus affure su of That, is deservedly call'd, The Rule of Faith.] Yet, tho' we should trumpet this into his Ears every moment, he is still Deaf, and never takes notice of it, or regards it in his whole Reply; Nay, he diverts from it with all the haft he can make, when our expres words force him to it. To do this with the greater Formality and Solemnity, he Entitles his Book, [A Discourse concerning the Nature and Grounds of the Certainty of Faith.] Which Expression is fo Large, that it leaves it Indifferent for him, under that Head, either to treat of Faith as 'tis in its felf, viz. as his Divine; or of Faith as 'tis Controverted between us; that is of our Faith as 'tis Ascertainable to us to be Christ's true Doctrin. And, that we may see this was done by Design, when he comes to determine the Sense of those Equivocal Words, he pitches upon that Meaning of them which is quite beside our purpose, and nothing at all to our Question: viz. upon Christ's Faith as 'tis Divine; which is -not disputed but agreed to be such; and this, whether the Faith comes to our knowledge by Tradition attesting it; or by an Absolutely Certain Interpretation of Scripture; and the fole Question is, whether the Tradition of the Church or the Letter of Scripture interpreted by any Way his Principles afford my be the more Certain and more Clear Way to give us Christ's Sense, or (which is the same) our Faith. How untoward a Procedure is it then, to stand quoting our School-Divines against me, whenas the Objects of Controversy and of School-Divinity are so vastly different: the one treating of Faith as made known to the World at first by Divine-Revelation; the other, of the Way to know now what was at first Divinely revealed, by Human Motives inducing men to the Acceptation of it of for the fame Doctrin.

Doct in Hence lalfo, when he was to bring Arguments which fould coince, by his Principles; that the Faith held now is the fame that was revealed at first, to avoid that impossible task, he falls unseasonably to alledge God's Grace and Invisible Moral Qualifications : Which tho' absolutely requise in many regards to Faith as 'us formally Di-Vine; yet are they most improper to be alledg'd in Controver y against an Adversary, for a Proof that what he holds is the first-taught Do-Etrine; fince only God himfelf can know whether the Alledger or any

men else has those Supernatural Means or no.

To put a stop once for all to this imperiment Topich, and to she how he trifles while he quotes our School-Divines. I alledge Firft that the plain state of the Question lately given, which runs through our whole Controversy, has forestall'd all be can object from them; unless he can shew that they stated the Question, and treated of Faith under the same Consideration, as we do in our Controversy; which I am Certain he cannot instance in so much as any one of them: And in case they do not state it after the fame manner we do in our Controverfy, with what fense can it be pretended that I contradict Them, or They Me, whenas we do not speak of the same Point, and a Contradiction must be ad idem? Secondly, Our Divines bring Movives of Credibility to prove Christian Faith to be Divine and True; such a are Miracles, the Conversion of the World, the Sufferings of the Mantyrs, &c. Very good, would Dr St. reply, thefe might prove the Faith profest in those times to be True: but you have alter'd that Faith fince, and therefore you are to prove that the Faith you profefs now is the fanse which was of old. So that, out of the very nature of our circumstances. This is the Only Point between us, and the main busnes of our controversy about the Rule of Faith, or the Ground that can justify its Invariable Conveyance downwards; for this being made out by us, all the rest is admitted. Thirdly, Hence both the Protestant and We agree, that That is to be called the Rule of Intro by * Dr Tillot- which the knowledge of Christ's Doctrin is convey'd certainly fon's Rule of down to us at the diffance of fo many Ages from the time of its first Delivery. Does any of our School-Divines take the Words [Rule of Faith] in this Senfe ? Not one. They concern the infeliers with what serves for their purpose, and call that a Rale of Saith which barely contains Faith. Fourthly, Our only Point deing to know assuredly the former Faith by a Certain Conveyer, but must

Faith. p. 6.7.

must this be made out to those who are enquiring what is Christ's True Doctrin ? Must we bid them rely on their Private Interpretations of Scripture ? No surely; for this is the way Proper to all Herenicks. Must we bring them the Publick Interpretation of it by the Church? This might do the deed so we could manifest this by some Knowledges those Candidates are already posses'd of, and did admit. Must we then, at the first dash, alledge the Publick Interpretation of the Church Divinely affifted? What effect can this have upon those who do not yet hold that Tenet; and, consequently, how can this be a Proper Argument to convince them? It remains then that we can only begin with their unelevated Reason, by alledging the Church's buman-Authority or Tradition (the most vast and best-qualify'd Testimony to convey down a notorious matter of Fact, of Infinite. Conceru, that ever was fince the World was Created) for a Certain Conveyer of Faith from the time that those Motives of Credibility, proving the then-Faith to be Divine, were on foot. And, if fo, why not with the same labour, and for the same Reasons, to bring it down from the very Beginning of the Church? And if we must alledge it, are we not oblig'd, as Disputants, to bring such Arguments, to prove that Authority Certain, as do conclude that Point? If they do not, what are they good for in a Controversy, or what signifies a Proof that Concludes nothing ? This is the Sum of my Procedure and my Reasons for it in hort; which are abundantly sufficient to shew to any man of Sense, that while the Doctor objects our School-Divines to one in my Circumstances, his hand is all the while in the wrong Box, as will more at large be been hereafter. He might have feen cited by me in my . Clypeus Septemplex, two Writers of ereat Eminency, viz. Father Fisher, the most Learned Concroversist of his Age here in England; and a Modern Author, Dominicus de Sancta Trinitate, whose Book was Frinted at Rome it Telf, and approved by the Magister Sacri Palatii, who (to omio divers others) do abet each particular Branch of my Dollrin; which renders insignificant all his pretence of my Singularity, and my Opposition to the Catholick Controvertists.

That to leave off this necessary Digression and proceed. As our Doctor has shuffled off the whole Question by taking the word [Faith] as treated of by us; in awrong Sense, so he behaves himself as ill in every particular of the rest of his Tiele; viz, in his discoursing of his precended [Lev-bunte] of Faith, and of the [Betwee] and the [Grounds] of it. He

P. 212.

cannot be won to give us any Account bow his Grounds Influence he Points of Faith with the Absolute Certainty he presended. And as for the Lettainty is self, (the only word of his Title that is test) be never shews how any one Article (even though it be most Fundamentall) is absolutely seem'd from being False or Heretical, by any Rule, Ground or Way be assigns us. Nor can I imagin any thing could tempt him to so strange Extravagances, but the streight he was in, being put to ship his Faith Absolutely Certain; and his Despondency ever to perform an Undertaking, which he foresaw was, by his shallow Frinciples, impossible to be atchiev'd. And hence he was necessitated to all these crassiy Shifts, and Wiles, and all those Unsound Methods which, like so many complicated Diseases, affect his languishing Discourse and dying Cause; as shall be laid open in the Progress of this Discourse, and particularly, in the Concluding Section. I shall only instance at present in two or three Material ones, which, like the Grain in wood.

run through his whole Work. For Example:

When any Question is propounded which grows too troublesome, he never pursues that Game but flushes up another, and flies at that, 'in the true Point be out of fight. Tell him our Point is whether the High Mysteries and other Spiritual Articles of Faith be Clear in Scrip ture; he will never answer directly, but runs to Points necessary to Salvation. Ask him if the Tenet of Christ's Godhead be no cessary to Salvation; no direct Answer can we get to that no ther, the' it be the very Point we instanc't in. Press him that there are no Unnecessary Points; and, therefore, that All are Necessars for the Generality of the Church, he cries Alas for me! but answers nothing. Ask him what Points he accounts Necessary? He is perfeetly mute: 'Till at length be shuffles about so, that the true Question which is about a Rule of staith, comes to be chang'd into a Rule of Manners; and those High Spiritual Points which are most properly Christian, and could only be known to the World by Divine Revelation, are thrown aside; and Moral ones put in their place, which were known to many even of the Heathen Writers. And this is the best Sense I can pick out of a man who affects to wrap up those Tenets of his, and their Consequences, which he thinks would not be for his Credit to discover, in Mysterious Reserves. The like Shuffling be uses in the Notion of Certainty, or any other than it of Concern in our present Disputes for he is a very impartial

man, and treats whem All alike. Ask bim then, If Saith be Alfolutely Certain by his Grounds? He will not fayit, but more than once hines. the contrary. Are the Grounds of it at leaft Absolutely Certain, the' be makes them fuch ill-natur'd things that (contrary to all other Grounds in the world) they keep their Abfolute Certainty to themselves, and will let. Faith have none of it ? Yes; he'll tell you they are; provided that by AbsoluteCertainty you will mean such a Certainty as will permit those Grounds may be False, and Faith built upon them much more: for we are to know tis a Maxim with him that the Abfolute Certainty be allows his Groundsis possible tob: False, and he allows a les degree of Certainty to Particular Points than to his Grounds, fo that Faith may much more easily be False then his Grounds may, though they may be Falfetoo. And all this our of an Antipathy-I Suppose, to Infallibility. Vecause the abominable Papists own it ; as if Mankind did not use to fay they are Infallibly Certain of some things before the Papists were born. What then is this Absolute Certainty ? Is it meerly built on his Apprehension or Thinking it fo? No, but upon such an Evidence as the Thing is capable of Very good. Is any thing in the world capable to be inoton? 'Tis a strange Faradox to deny is; and yet if he granes it he cannot escape meeting with this bug-bear Intallibility : For, if the Knowledge (as it is) be as the Thing is, and the Thing be Infallibly as it felt is, the Knowledge is Intallfuly as the Thing is. Here Genthmen you may expect he will surn is off with some scornfull Irony, for he never in his life answer'd any such preffing Reason any other I way. But the Are ument will not be laught out of Countenance; and therefore if Infallibility muft be allowed, he is to flow us what harm would come to Faith if the Previous Grounds of it, as to our Knowledge, were thus Certain? None at all. But then, alas! his Credit and his Cause will go to wrack; for no shew or shadow of any such Argument can his superficial Principles allow us! and therefore no Absolute Certainty will be yield to the Grounds to know Christ's Faith, but fuch a one as permits all Mankind may be deceiv'd in them, and much more in knowing what is bis Dollrimit felf after me have those Grounds : For Absolute Certainty Thall not mean Infallibility, let me fay and prove what we will. Hopever I'le venture to ask him once more; Since (as he fays) the Thing, notwithstanding the Absolute Certainty we have of its being True, may yet be Falle, les ut fuppofe (as eis not impossible, there being degree of Contingency in it) that it happens to be Falfe, Can be so that Cafe have Abjolice Certainty that a Falshood is True? Here

Here it goes bard with him, nor can all his old Hamben Philosophers. be fo of recurrs to, in the least help him out. He has but one Refuge that I know of to fly to; and that is to ufe fome trick to fouffle away from Absolute Certainty, and say that he meant by it Sufficient Certainty, and That be'l flick to when all his new notions fail him. For Absolute Certainty he was unluckily forc's upon by Mr G. tho' he had no acquaintance with it, or friendship for it; but his Inclination and Heart was for Sufficient Certainty. And good reason, for in the Santtuary of that Common Word be's as fafe as in an Enchanted Caftle. Those scurvy Particularizing Expressions are Tell-tales, and by their Lavishness are apt to discover Sense or Nonsense; but This keeps aloof, and by fignifying nothing at all determinately, is past the reach of any Confuse. But if you sell him 'tis a Relative word, and put him apon proving that his pollible-falle Certainty is Sufficient to conclude it to be True, that any Point of his Faith is the fame that our Divine Mafter taught the World, be'l no more hear or mind you than be did me when I allede'd that a Rule and Ground were Relative words too; and, therefore, must communicate their Curtain to all the Particular Points they relate to. And, if you continue to prefe bins bard with fuch Cramp-questions, be'l tell you he's not at leafure baning bu foot in the firrup to take a tong Journey as far as Irent; So being Bankrups of Reason be withdraws bis Effects thence to Trade more foremerely (as be bopes) in Citations; and finding bimel besten at Tradition he gets Letters of Repris all from bis new Logick to revenge bim felf on us in combating the Tridentin Council; To pl be will receive an An fiver when be first shews as that he stood firm in he own Principles at home, ere be took such a leap beyond Sea; and Satisfies the World how it is possible that a man who confesses be bas no Absolute Certainty of Christian Faith, can be sufficiently qualify'd either to prove any Tenet of his own, or disprove any Tenes of others to be truly Christian.

In a word, bis chief Art is to Cloub his Arts; and he is a great Mester at it. His Aim is to make his Discourses run plansibly, whatever it costs his Credit: which he hopes is so great now with the Inseriour Clargy, that, let him be as Prodigall of it as he will, it can never bear nausted. The zelling of his take smoothly will take much with those Readers who idwell in the middle stops. But strip his Discourse of all those medsall Ornaments and Assistances, and its plain importances Nonsense in cuerpo. For, not any shing title a solid Ground it sounds

bis whole Book: The Manufacture and Contrivance of it is all in all.

It may perhaps be thought by some that I am too downright with him in divers of my Expressions; but I desire them to consider that I do not use him half so rudely as some of the Church of England have done; and besides, that in doing that little I did, I do but write after his own Copy; and fall very short too of imitating him, as appears by his Angry Viper, venomous froth, Gall, Spleen, Folly, Malice, &c. His Faults are Great, and Many; and must I not Name them when I am obliged to lay them open? If I must, the very Names we give to Great Faults will be Harsh words, let me do what I can. Yet I have moderated them as much as the sense of what I ow'd to Christian Faith would give me leave. Besides as my Geniue leads me to carry it friendly with unpretended Honesty tho Erfing; so it inclines me to show less respect to a man, who as I see plainly by a constant Experience, has none as all for Truth, but practices and pursues all over Study'd Inducerity.

I have one Request, or rather a fair Offer to make the Bri which is that, fince it is fo mortef ying to a man who, (as appears by all bis former Writings) same to reduce Truth to Evidence and Principles, to be fift task's in laying open such multitudes of his Shifes and Prevarications, (For I do think in my Confeience I have not either wether Prefacts or my following Book even hinted a quarter of them) he would condefeend that we may each of us chuse two worthy Gentlemen; who, leaving out the Question of Right, may examin only matter of Fact, viz. which of ususes Indirect Tricks and Stratagems to avoid the force of Truth, and which of us candidly pursues it; and let them after a mutuall protestation upon their Honours, that they will pass an Impartial Verdict, gite under their Hands the particulars in which each of us have notoriously fail'd or falter'd: I mean that such Faults, whether of Commission or Omission, should be noted as may appear to be wilfully distingenuous or affettedly Insincere, and not meerly Humane Overlights. This fair and Equal Offer, Gentlemen, will exceedingly conduce to your and all our Readers Satisfaction; and Dr St's accepting it is the only way to do right to his Credit, which stands impeacht of using such unworthy Methods : And your pressing him to it, will be both a Justification of your Friendhip and Esteem for him, and be also received as a very great favour by with the a state with contract part and but to make the quality which

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Page 8. r. unconfonantly. P. 23. L. 15. nor did, p. 28. l. 3. of the Approven, p. 25. l. 24. can be competent. p. 64. l. 22. thence embrace. p. 68. l. 21. Cerinthians. p. 76. l. 27. disparate. p. 101. l. 33. may as much. p. 101. l. 2. them not to. p. 106. l. 29. 30. is got. p. 108. l. 1. not at all. p. 112. l. 16 plain and easy. p. 115. l. 13. recurr to. Ibid l. ult. Censures. p. 127. l. 33. may Decree. p. 128. l. 13. 14. may seem. p. 140. l. 2. following it, then. p. 150. l. 19. Argument good. p. 152. l. 23. stand yet in. p. 256. l. 19. shewing it. p. 166. l. 7. of my words. p. 269. (in the Margent) See above. p. 136.

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million, field in noted in may rose to be trill any a recension or solve felledly information or, and not severy Hamme Overlies, This pair and felledly information, will arrive and out and all out Keaders San transfer and Dr. St. accounting it is the only tree to do to a bit. At the only tree to be the solve of the contract of the bit and the solve of the bit at the only tree to be the solve of the bit at the solve of the bit at the solve of the solve of the bit at the solve of the solve of the bit at the solve of the s

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Introduction.

I. TN his Preamble Dr. St. according to his usual way of confuting, quarrels every word he meets with, and gives every circumstance an invidious turn. This looks brisk; but how weak and flat he is in his Arguments shall be seen hereafter. In the mean time the dimmest Eye may discern how Impertinent this is to our Dispute, and to the Certainty of his Grounds of Fath, nay to his own Title-page. I am forry to fee him so much out of humour, as to run against, and frike at every thing near him, tho' it lay not in his way. But finking men, when their case is desperate, must eatch at frams having no firmer support at hand to keep them from drowning. First, He wonders why Mr. G. did not defend his own cause himself. He was at that very time call'd upon to attend his Majesties Service; and it was a Duty owing to Truth and our Sovereign, as well as Charity and Friendship to him, that Some body should step in to supply for him. 2ly, Why must J.S. be the man? Because it was desir'd of him; and, he was besides prest to it by many Judicious Perlons; as one who had, in their Opinion, and by the Dr's own tacit Confession by his silence for 15 years, unanswerably overthrown his Principles in Erroz Pon-plut; and, besides, he was injur'd, provok'd, and in a manner Chelleng'd by him in his Second Letter, by his quoting and abetting Harefis Blacloana, which was writ delignedly

P. 13

· Clypeus Septemplex & Vindicia.

P. s.

* See Error Non-pluft.

Dr. Tillotson. and Dr. Stillingfleet.

edly against Him; and by pretending the way of Controverly he follow'd, was Pelagainism. Now it belong'd properly to F. S. to clear this by his own Pen; and (whatever the Dr's Intention was) I am to thank himhe has put a force upon me to Vindicate my felf in English, which I have done in two Latin Treatises a. bove ten years ago, to the Satisfaction of my Judges and Superiors, and the farther Illustration and Abetment of what I had written in my former Books. 2/r, He quarrels the Titles of my Catholick Letters, and that so one Church of the Christian World ever own'd it. And does he in his great Learning think the Churchis to Own, or prescribe every one their particular Methods of handling Controvers? All the is to do is to deliver to us Chriff's Doctrine; and then leave it to the Learning of her Controversifis to take fuch Methods to defend it as best sutes with their Circumstances, and the Erigencies of the Persons they are to treat with. Are all the * Principles Dr. St. laid ? Is all his Difcourse at the Conference with Mr. G? Is his avow'd Pofition, that every Sober Enquirer may without the Churches belp find out all necessary Points of Faith, own'd by any one Catholic Church? I know not what that Great Conventicle of Geneva may do, or what the new one that is now ere-Dr.Burnet, Ging here by the * Triumvirate of the Church of Eng. land's Reformers, mentioned in the fourrilous Reply to the Bishop of Oxford, may do in time, when they have brought about their Projects : but I am confident he shall never find any one Catholick Church that ever own'd diverse of his Principles and that Position. 417, But why did I not call those Letters [Roman-Catholick] but Catholick. He tells the Reader with much affuredness I durft not do fe, becamfe I had not forgotten bom hardly I had tately escaped Censure at Rome. Now, another man whole Reason was free and undiffurb'd, would think I should rather rather have done this, in Gratitude to their allowing and accepting my Defence upon fuch honourable terms Rom: 1. 12 as a kind Admonition, that mindfull of the Apostles words, I am a Debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians. both to the Wife and to the Unwife, I I would explain my felf as to some passages, which were * somewhat obscure * Aliquantufrom the * ambiguity of a word. My true reason, if he * Ob Book will needs have it, was, because Dr. St's private-spirited vationem u-Rule was Common to all Hereticks; and the Rule I de- triufq; Evifended was quite opposite to it, and therefore Catholick; and this, even in the sense of many Eminent Protestants, who pretend to Universal Tradition as the Rule, to ascertain their Interpretations of Scripture; to whom the name of [Roman] is not fo agreeable.

lum obfcura.

2. The Dr. will ftill be leaving the road-way of the Question, tho' (which I am forry to see) he runs himself into the Bryars most wofully. So he tells the Reader I ought to have let him alone, and not have writ against him, because I have done next to nothing for my felf, and feem to have forgotten the Anfiver to my Sure footing, meaning Dr. Tillos fon's Rule of Satth. Yes, quite forgotten it without doubt ! About two Months after that Answer came out, I publish'd my Letter et Thanks. In which I laid open how he had mistaken still the main point in Controversy; how he had willfully perverted my Sense all along, and fallify'd my Words in many places; nay, inferted some of his own, and then impugn'd what himself had disingenuously added; I defended my Testimonies, and reply'd to the most concerning passages. Then, observing that his whole Anfwer proceeded on a Falle Ground, viz. That there was no Rule of Faith but what left it under the Scandalous ignominy of being perhaps False, that is, indeed no Rule at all; therefore to stubb-up his shallow-rooted work from its Foundations, I writ another Treatife [Saith

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P. 3.

Introduction to Faith Vindication.

to the End.

Heads that * the Motives as laid in Second Canfes by Gods Providence to light Markind in their way to Faith, or the (Rule of Faith, (and confequently Faith it felf, in what it depends on that Rule, that is, as to us,) must be Impos-Faith Vin- fible to be false; and * apply'd it home against Dr St. and Dr. Tillotfon at the End of that Treatife; and thence shew'd that his Book could have no just claim to any farther Answer, and that the branches must necessarily be held Wither'd and Saples when the Root was once shown to be rotten. Nor content with this, I follow'd on my blow and penn'd a short discourse, entitled The Method to arrive at Satisfaction in Religion; comprizing, in short, the strength of Sure footing; and reduc't each branch of it to Self-Evident Propositions, which force Humane Nature to affent to their Verity. Farther it was not possible to go. Yet all this, my candid Adversaries, who must not acknowledge it for fear of giving under their hands they owe a Debt they can never pay, flubber over with affuring their Readers, I have done next to nothing in my own Defence. It feems that to talk triflingly is with them to do All; and Principles and clearest Evidences, are either Nothing at all, or next to it.

3. What Reply made Dr. Tillotfon? Why, he had a mind to print his Sermons; and, knowing his Auditory were his best-inclin'd Friends, in a Preface (forfooth) to them, he gives a flight touch at each of those Treatises. He endeavours to clear himself of Two of his many Infincerities, and (oh wonderfull!) with about a dozen Jefts quite confutes Three Books. I would not let him reft so, nor enjoy even this empty vapour; but gave a full and diftinet Reply to his Preface in Reason againt Rallery. I instructed his shallow Logick, utterly unacquainted with the First Principles of our Understanding, with which Nature imbues even the rudeft. I prov'd against him

evidently

evidently those few of his many faults of which he had labour'd to purge himself. I laid open the Folly and Weakness of his First Principle; and accus'd him severely of making both Christian Faith and the Tenet of a Deity uncertain; and this by vertue of that very First Principle of his: And, out of my zeal for fuch dear concerns. I charg'd home upon him those two shamefull Tenets by many Arguments. Since which time he has not reply'd a word, but has fate very contentedly under that heaviest Scandal full fifteen Years; and now he stands indebted to me for an Answer to all those Treatises. And I have been fo civil a Creditor as not once to call upon him feverely for such considerable Arrears, till Dr. st. would needs have me to be his Debtor, and so oblig'd me to make up the Accounts between us. Now, to have done all this, is, if a man of Dr. Sr's Sincerity may be trusted, to do next to nothing, and not to have defended my felf.

4. But fince he will have it fo, let's fee what Dr. St. himself, who objects this, has done to defend Himself. He undertook to write Dinciples for his Protestant Religion. I shew'd in * Errour Monplust he had not laid one for * From pa. that particular end. I manifested that he was guilty of 212. to the the most weak piece of Illogical procedure that ever mortal man stumbled upon 3 by making almost all his Conclusions to be Self-Evident and beyond needing any Proof; and his Principles which should prove them, and fo ought to be clearer than they, Obscure or Falle. * I * Error Non? shew'd the Grounds of his Discourse to be plain Contra-plust, p. 236. dictions and some of his pretended Principles to lead directly to * Phanaticism. And yet he has quietly endur'd * Ibid. F. his Doctrine, concerning the Grounds of his Faith to be ftigmatiz'd for Erroneous, and himself declar'd Nonplust; nay he has had the phlegm to fee himfelf expos'd in Capital Letters in the Title-Page of that Book for a span of Do Principles; and yet has born it with Invincible and

Heroical

not fo particularly infifted on at this time, had he not fo unterly forgot himself, as to charge me to have done next to nothing in my own defence, when I had so manifestly baffled and put to filence, (those who have most reason to pardon my glorying) Dr. Tillotson and Himself. He'll pretend I owe him an Answer to an Appendix of his: the main of which is answer'd in Faith Vindicated, where its Grounds are subverted; and, if any thing, besides the Raillery, remains unspoken to in Error Nonplust, when he pays me my Hundred Pound, I will reckon with him for his Braß Shilling. So much difference in just value Principles ought to have above a loose Difcourse made up of meer misrepresentations and Drollery. In the mean time, it were not amiss to give the Reader an Instance how he quite misses the bus'ness we are about, in that Appendix; which, I conceive, is the most solid way of confuting the whole. * If Mr. S. (fays he) would have undertaken to have told us who they were that first peopled America, and from what place they came, by the Tradition of the prefent Inhabitants; and what famous actions had been done there in former Ages: we might have thought indeed, that fole Tradition had been a very fafe may to convey matters of Fact from one Age to another. T By which we fee he both forgets that the Tradition we speak of is Practical, and waves all the obligations and Motives to continue the memory of Christs Doctrines which are the greatest God himself could impose, or Man's nature is capable of. He should have thewn us that those Inhabitants of America, had some Conflant and Obligatory Practices and Solemnities, Commemorating their coming from another Nation, or their former Great Actions (of the same kind the Children of Hrael had of their deliverance out of Egypt) and then he might draw thence fome show of an Objection.

* App. to the Rule of Faith. p. 82.

jection. And yet, even then, it would fall short of a Parallel to the force of Christian Tradition; unless the Matters to be convey'd were of Equal Concern, and the Obligations to propagate them, Equally forcible and binding. I shall propose to him an Instance of the force of Our Tradition, and than ask his judgment of it. Suppose the Anniversary of the Powder-Plot should be kept on foot, by Ringing of Bells, Bonefires, Squibbs, and spitefull Preaching against All Catholicks indifferently, and their very Religion it felf, as guilty of that Villanous Treason; I would know of him whether the Memory of it, tho' kept alive by this Practical Solemnity but once a year, would not be perpetuated for thoufands of Generations, or how it should ever be forgot? If (as I am fure he must) he grants it; he must grant withall that the Tradition of Christ's Dottrine, which had a fource incomparably larger, and was of the highest Concern to every particular Person not to desert it, but to hold to it, practice & live according to it Daily, & propagate it to others, must be in a manner infinitely stronger. For, fure, he will not say that the Hatred against the Papists, which, I fear, is the main Motive to continue the other, is a more powerfull Cause to effect this, than all the Motives laid by God, and the Care of the Salvation of themfelves and their Posterity was for the Body of the Church to perpetuate a Doctrine that came from Heaven. In a word, this one Instance is enough to shew evidently that he either grofsly miftakes, or wilfully perveres in that Appendix the whole Subject about which we are there discoursing. And is such a slight piece, or such a man worth answering, were it not for the Repute he has got, not for writing for the Church of England, but for his Hatred and Scribbling against the Papilts? Since this one Errour is fo Fundamentall that it must needs influence all that Discourse of his as far as 'tis Serious, or pretends

to Solidity; and, so, leaves nothing to be replied to but wilely Shuffles and aiery Trifles, which are Frivolous in themselves, and (in his Writings) Endless.

SECT. I.

The Author of the Catholique Letters clear'd from Dr. St.'s borrow'd Calumnies.

5. HAving behav'd himself thus unfortunately to himself and his Friends ever since he came upon the Stage, Dr. St. comes to fettle his Method, which he fays, he thinks is most Natural and Effectual to proceed in, in handling the main Subject of our Debate about the Pature and Grounds of the Certainty of faith. It confifts of Four Heads: and I shall follow my Leader, he being such a Master of Method, and take them as they lie. The First is, To shew how unsit J.S. is of all men to undertake this Cause, who contradicts himself as occasion serves. Certainly, this man has a Method as well as a Logick peculiar to himself. Does it follow so Naturally that Faith needs no Higher Grounds of Certainty, because J.S. writes unconstantly? Or, does he prove fo Effectually he has thems his Grounds do allow Faith, as 'tis controverted between us, the Certainty due to it's Nature, because I write weakly. But, the truth is, his Method is to avoid all Me, thod; and to wriggle in twenty Impertinent and Invidious things, to make a shew of having said a great deal, tho' to no purpofe: and to raise as much Dust as he can, that he may run away from the business we are about, and bide bimfelf in the Mift. But is he fure that F. S. contradies himself? Impartial men will doubt it, when they shall know, that both those fempretended contradictions he has borrow'd out of Lominus and many more were obiected

jected and earnestly press'd against me in a far-distant Tribunal; where my felf was unknown, and had few or rather no Friends, but what my Caufe & Defences gave me: That they were discust by those strictest Judges and compar'd with my Answers, and yet not so much as the least check given me, or any Correction of my Books, even in the least tittle, was order'd; though this be a thing not unusual in such cases: That the business already transit in rem judicatam; and that the Satisfaction I gave then to Superiours, who could have no imaginable reafon to be favourable to me, to the prejudice of Catholick Doctrine, is an abundant clearing of the Soundness of my Writings, and the Sincerity of my Defences. It would, I fay, be enough to do this, and then leave the Doctor's malice to the Censure of all Ingenuous Persons, for objecting anew things of which I was about Eleven years ago, fo authentiquely acquitted. But alas! his Methed, which oblig'd him to speak to the true Point as little as he could for shame, and to fill up an empty figure of an Answer with as many Impertinencies as he could well hook in, led him so directly to it, that he could not for his heart avoid it. Should he object Murther or any other heinous Crime to a pretended Malefactor, already clear'd of it by his Proper Judges and the Court, every honest man would admire at his folly; but all's meritorious with his Party against the Papists. Tho', I say, this be fufficient for my Vindication; yet because those * Clypeus * Defences of mine were in Latin, and the clearing this Septemplex Point conduces very much to the shortening and illu- & Vindicia. strating my future Answer, I shall repeat here some few particulars of many which are found there at large. And First, I shall put some notes to give a clear Light of this business. Next I shall show his Shallowness and Infincerity in what he objects. Thirdly, I will put down the most Authentick Approbations of my Books by the Testimony

Testimony of Learned Men of all forts, and beyond all Exception; and then rested on his Imprudence in ma-

king fuch an objection.

6. For the First, Ilay these Notes. 1. That School-Disines discourse of Faith under another Notion or Consideration than Controvertists do. The former treat of it as'tis a Theological Virtue, and the Material Objects of it, as reveal'd by a Testimony formally Divine: And they prove it to be such by alledging the Miracles done to attest it; the wonderfull Conversion of the World by it, and the admirable Effects issuing from it; as the Santtity of it's Protesfors that live up to it, the Heroick Sufferings of Martyrs, de. And, because tis a supernatural Virtue, and, fo, depends on God's supernatural Influence as much as Natural Effects do on His Power as Author of Nature; hence, they consider it as introduc't by Supernatural Dispositions inclining men to it, and God's Heavenly Grace making them embrace it and adhere to it confantly. On the other fide, Controvertiffs, particularly We in our Modern Controversies, being to argue against those who admit whatever was taught by Christ to be Divine, cannot possibly have the least occasion to treat ofit as tis fach, or ule any of the former Arguments that are apt to proce it such; but accommodate our Discourses precifely to make out what those men deny; that is, the Grounds by which we come to know affured/y that thefe or those Points were taught by Christ. Much less do we confider Faith as it depends on the Workings of God's Holy Spirit, illuminating Interiourly the Souls of the Faithfull, and faing them in their Faith; thefe being Invisible and so Impossible to be brought into Arguments, or produc's against an Adversary in our Controversial Disputes. 2. That 'eis evident that in all my Books I am writing Controverses; and, consequently, writing of Paith precisely as 'the controversed between me and my Oppofers:

Oppolers: Which manifeftly evinces that I treat of it under none of those Considerations School-Divines do : in regard none of my Adversaries, (at least professedly) dem'it to be Divine, or that God's Grace is requifite to it. Nor can any man shew so much as One Argument in all my Books that looks that way. 3. That, fince 'tis manifest beyond all Cavill that we are writing Controverly, and confequently treating of Faith precifely as 'tis Controverted ; and there are but Two Points that can be controverted in relation to the Evincing or Defending the Truth of Christian Faith: The one, that what Christ taught was Divine; the other, that Christ taught what we now believe; the Former of which being granted by all the Deferters of the Church, and therefore cannot possibly need to be Prov'd by Me, or any in my Circumstances; it follows evidently that the later Point is only that which can be debated between me and my Adversaries; that is, we are only to treat of Faith as it stands under that Abstraction or Consideration; that is, as it stands under some certain Rule, fecuring us that it was taught by Christ; It being agreed on all hands, that, if he taught it, it Is Divine. 4. That the' this and no other can with any fense be our Task, yet 'tis tedious to stand repeating at every turn this Abstracted Acception of Faith, as 'tis found or treated in our Controversies, or reiterating still this reduplication [as taught by Chrift ;] but 'tis enough to have exprest it at first in Prefaces, and the State of the Quefion, and afterwards upon occasion in many fignal * See Clype passages, which I did very punctually, as appears by us Septemmy * Defences, where I instanc't in Sixty three several plex from. p. places: I might fay, I did it in whole Books, where I 151. to 194. spoke in short, as is seen in my * Method; in which p. 43. very fmall Treatife 'tis inculcated above twenty times. Whence, where ever I use the fingle word [Faith] it

ding to what is Controverted between us. Such a follicitous Repetition would argue a diffrust in me, that my Readers wanted Common Sense; who could not reflect on what was in hand, or keep a heedfull eye upon what was at first, and once for all declar'd and signally express in those remarkable places. Lastly, That my treating of what Motives or Rule Christian Faith must have in it felf, or in its own nature to make good its Truth, (which is Effential to it) as I did particularly in Faith Vindicated, does not exceed the bounds of Controversy, or treat of Faith as 'tis a Theological Virtue, or in any Consideration relating to it as such: for I still express my self over and over in the Introduction to speak of its Rule, or of Faith, as proveable by its Rule; and tho' I do not there apply it against any Adversary, yet in the Inferences at the End I do this against Dr. Til lotfon and Himfelf, without any Reply for these Fifteen years: Nor, have they any Possible way to come off, but either, by answering Faith Vindicated, and shewing there needs no Absolutely Certain Rule to secure us of our having Christian Faith; or, by shewing that they have fome Rule Absolutely securing those from Error who rely on it. The same Introduction, and the same Answer serves to show how Moral Certainty of the Infallibility of this Rule is, and how it is not sufficient. For I declare my felf * there to speak of the Nature of those dicated Intro- Motives (or Rule) in themselves and as laid in Second duction.p. 18. Caufes by Gods Providence to light Mankind in their way to Faith; to which the dimne & of Eye-fight, neglect to look at all, or looking the wrong way, even in many particular men, is Extrinsical and Contingent. Moral Evidence then of the Rule of Faith's Certainty, nay, even less, may serve many particular men ; for they are still fecur'd from Errour, by adhering to what fuch a Rule delivers,

Faith Vin-

tho' they penetrate not the Grounds of its Certainty; with which it well confifts that that Rule as laid by God to light or fatisfy all Mankind, who are in their way to Faith, must be in it self more than Morally Certain, or must be impossible to be False; otherwise it could not perfectly satisfy acute Schollars that what it abets is True; nor enable Pastors and Learned men to defend the Truth of Faith as far as it depends on that Rule; nor Secure any man, Learned or Unlearned, from Erring in Faith; whereas, by being thus Absolutely Certain, it secures every man, tho' never so weak, from Errour while he follows it, and preserves inviolable the Truth of Faith it self.

7. This last Note fully answers his first pretended Contradiction, that my Chief End in that Treatife (viz. Faith Vindicated) was to fettle Christian Faith, and yet that I speak not of Faith in it self, but as it it controverted. For I no where meddle with Faith in it felf, or as it is a Theological Virtue as School-Divines do, but meerly in order to my Oppofers. With which may well confift, that I may write a Book to fettle Christian Faith by shewing it must have a Certain Rule, before I apply it against my Adversaries, by shewing they have no such Rule, and so no Certainty of their Faith; as I did against Himself and Dr. T. at the End of that Book, and do peremptorily Challenge them to clear themselves of those Inferences, and prove themselves to be Holders of Christs Dollrine or Christians. An Instance will shew how weak this Cavil is. A Scrivener makes a Pen ? and his Primary Intention, confidering him, as he is doing that Action, is that the Pen should be a good one; and his writing taking him precifely as a Pen maker was Secondary and Occasional. And yet writing was for all that his Primary Intention as he was a Scrivener. Thus it past with me. My Main, Primary, and (if he will) precise

P. 7.

precise End in that Treatise was to settle Christian Faith, by demonstrating it was to have a sure Foundation: and in this was terminated the particular design of that Book. Now, the doing this was apt to exclude all pretenders to Christianity, who had no such Grounds; but I did not this, till I had ended the Treatise, nor stood applying my Discourses, or striking my Opposer just then with the Weapon I was but a making. Which yet hinders not but the Primary End of writing that whole Treatise was in Order to my Opposers, tho a little more remotely; and this is so Evident by my Inferences at the End, that none but a Caviller, enraged that he could not answer them, would have made such

an Objection.

8. Hence his Second, which Equivocates in the world Objects 7 is frivolous. For I no where treat of the Objects or Mysteries of Faith in themselves, or say the Connexion of their Terms must be Evident; but only that the Certainty of the Humane Authority of the Church. which I make our Rule, to know they were taught by Christ, must be prov'd from the Objects or things without us, viz. the Nature of Mankind, and the Nature of the Motives laid to perpetuate Christs Doctrine. And I wonder at his Infincerity to alledge this: when I had particularly forestall'd it in my Introduction (p. 18.) and declar'd there once for all, that in the following Treatife I only spoke of the Merives to light Mankind in their may to faith; Does he think the Mesteries of Faith are the May to Faith? Or can he pretend that the state of the Question, exprest so carefully beforehand in a Preface to fignify my meaning throughout the whole Treatife following, is totally to be fet afide and neglecteds and that only fingle words pickt out, where for brevity's fake I did not constantly repeat it, are to give my true Sense? What impertinent Brabbling

P. 8.

bling is this? Again, p. 16. 17. I no less punctually declare that I * only treat of the Objects or Points of * Introduction Faith, as their Truth depends on those Motives or Rule Vindicated. of Faith. Yet all will not do to a man bent upon Cavill. P. 16. 17.

o. My last Note, towards the End, let's him fee clearly when, to whom, and how, Infallible Affent is requisite and not requisite. And I had forestall'd this too before in an Elaborate Discourse from p. 131. to p. 158. in Error Nonplust; where I shew'd that since Faith must be True, and not possible to be a Lye, therefore all who have true Faith must be out of capacity of being in an Error, or must be in some manner Infallible. That it was enough fimply to bave Faith, that they be Materially Infallible, or not capable of being in an Error, by relying on a Ground that cannot deceive them (fuch as is the Testimony of Gods Church) tho' they see not how it must be so. Nay, that this is absolutely fufficient for * All who are coming to Faith; provided *Error Nonthey do not happen to doubt that their Reasons for the Plust. p. 140. Churches Infallibility are Inconclusive; and, fo, be apt to remain unsatisfy'd; or, are not bound to maintain the Truth of Faith against Opposers; in which case they are to be able to fee and prove the Conclusivenes of their Grounds from fome Certain Principle; which I call there to be Formally Infallible. This and much more is laid out there at large; which prevents most of his Objections here. But no notice takes the good Dr. of it. It was, it feems, too great a Mortification to him, to peruse a Book, which he was highly concern'd to anfwer, and knew he could not.

10. His Fourth Contradiction is folv'd in three lines. Itreated of the Humane Authority of the Church (the Rule of Faith) which was Extrinficul to Faith as 'ris a-Theological Virtue or Divine. Yet it being an Extrinfical Argument as at Testimony is, I therefore went about to

P. to.

prove it's force from Intrinsical Mediams, fetcht from the Natures of the Things; viz. Man's Nature, and the Nature of the Motives. Nor can the Certainty of Wir

nessing Authority be prov'd otherwise.

P. .. 1.

Ir. His Fifth is clear'd by my first four Notes; which Thew that I spoke of Faith, which was by the Confession of both Parties Divine and Supernatural, and for that reafon called fo by me; but did not treat of it as thus qualified, or go about to prove it Divine; but prov'd it's Truth meerly as it depended on Humane Faith previous to it; and so, did only formally treat of that Humane Faith it felf, on which the Knowledge of Divine Faith leans, and by which those coming to Divine Faith are rais'd up to it. Yet what hideous Outcries the Dr. makes here, that by my Doctrine we are to feek for the Certainty of Faith formally Divine & That I make Divine and Supernatural Faith derive it's Certainty from Natural Infallibility, 60. Tho' he knows as well as that he lives that we make Faith as Formally Divine derive it's Certainty from the Divine Authority testify'd to us by Miracles; That this Establishment of Divine Faithby Supernatural means is presuppos'd to our Question and granted by both sides; and that our only Point is how we may know certainly what was this Divine Faith thus ascertain'd at first. Whoever reads Third Catholick Letter. p. 23.24. will admire with what face he could object these falshoods, or counterfeit an Ignorance of what has been so often and fo clearly told him; and which he had feen fo particularly answer'd in my Defences: But this is his usual Sincerity. 'Tis pretty to observe into what a monstrous piece of Nonsense our Dr. has fall'n here: and how because I argue from Supernatural Faith, he thinks I am arguing for it or proving it. Whereas common fense tells every man who has not laid it aside, that he who argues from another thing, supposes that other thing, and, so cannot possibly,

possibly, while he does fo, go about to prove it, or treat of it. But it feems For and From are the fame with his great Reason, and not possible to be distinguishe. He might have feen other * Arguments drawn from the * Faith Vin-Supernaturality of Faith, to prove that the Rule which ject. 6, p. 149. is to light intelligent men, who are Unbelievers, to Faith, must be more then Morally Certain. But he thought best to chuse the worst; and, while he objected that too, mistook [From] for [For;] that is, the Premisses for the Conclusion, and the Cart for the Horse.

12. His Sixth Exception, if pertinent, amounts to this. I.S. did not prove any point Divine and Supernatural, therefore Dr. St. needs prove no point of Paith he holds to be truly deriv'd from Christ: A fair riddance of his whole Task! For the reft; We do not defire him to prove by his Rule one determinate point more than another; only, fince he talks of his Grounds, which cannot be such unless they derive their folid Virtue of supporting to what's built on them, we instance now and then in some main and most necessary Articles; of which, if he can give us no account how they come to be absolutely escertain'd by his Ground or Rule, he can give it of none. Each Point of Faith is of a determinate sense; We shew that Tradition gives and ascertains to us this determinate sense; and we shew why it must do so, and how it does so, & this with Abfolute Certainty. Let him shew his Rule has the power to do this, & then pretend we are on equal Ground. But alas! He must not say this who is all for Moral Certainty, and fancies nothing above it. For he cannot say by fueh Grounds any Point [is] or [is True] while it may be falle that they were taught by Christ; and if he feys they [are or were taught by Christ,] while they [may not be fo] he in plain terms affirms the fame thing may at once be and not be. For thither the Doctrine of Faith's possible fallbood must be reduc't at last, and the Greatest

Greatest of Contradictions will be found to be his First

Principle.

P. 13.

13. His 7th Exception is answer'd in my last Notes which shews that the Ground upon which the Truth of Faith depends must be more than Morally Certain; tho' every Believer needs not penetrate the force of those Grounds, or have even so much as Moral Certains of their Conclusiveness. But, what means he when he Objects my faying, that, True Saith, by reason of its Immobeable Grounds can bear an afferting the Imposibility of it's fallbood? Can this man do himfelf a greater prejudice, than by thus confessing, that he holds not Christing an Faith, absolutely speaking, True? Or can he lay a greater scandal on Christian Faith it felf, than to quarrel at a Polition that can give him no displeasure, but by af ferting it's perfect Truth? If this do not like his new fashion'd Christian Principles, I suppose he will own the contrary Polition, and affirm that True faith, by rea fon of it's Mobeable (or Uncertain) Grounds, Cannot bear an afferting the Absolute Impossibility of it's falthood; And this is in plain terms to affert, that absolutely speaking, True Faith may all be Falle: which is both Unchriftian, and frong Nonlense to boot. He should have Preach't this to his Auditory at Guildhall; and then he should have seen how every honest Hearer, would have abhorr'd his Do-Arine, have lookt upon Him as scarce balf a Christian, and on such a Faith as absurd, preternatural, and Irratio nal, as well as I did.

14. These are the greatest Contradictions the Dr. could pick even out of an Adversaries Book; concerning which he keeps such a mighty noise, blusters and triumphs. He tells the Reader, I affirm that Moral Certainty destroys the Essence of Faith. And I affirm it does, taking Faith without some absolutely certain Principle, as Demonstration is, to ground it on. For Faith is effenti-

P. 14- 15.

ally True; and it cannot be True to those who fee that, notwithstanding it's Grounds which are to prove it Christ's Doctrine, it may yet be none of his Doctrine Again, he fays I make Moral Certainty Sufficient and Infufficient for Faith. Diftinguish, good Doctor; 'Tis not Sufficient for the Ground of Faith as we treat of it; for, if there may be Deceit in that Ground, the Truth of Faith as to us, finks : * And yet Moral Certainty, and even left, * See S. o. of the force of that Ground is Sufficient to many, nay * All, * See Erro Non-pluft. fo they adhere to a Ground that is really Infallible, and p. 148. Salvation is attainable by those Persons. Oh, but Salvation is to be had by fuch a Faith no better grounded; and that's the main business. What ? If for want of a firm Ground, Faith bap to be Falfe? Who ever faid it? or that, in case any Point embrac't upon such a Ground happen to be Untrue, it could be a Point of Faith, or that any man could be fav'd by vertue of a Heretical Tenet, or a pernicions Falfood YYet, for want of Dr. Se's understanding plain sense, and his applying my words to a wrong subject, I must forfeit my Sincerity and Moral Honesty; whereas himself forfeits both by confounding every thing which I had fo * carefully diftinguisht. There is not a tittle ob * See my De jected by himfelf or Lominus, but I diftinctly and clearly claration and answer'd in my Clypeus Septemplex and Vindicia, to the farisfaction of all my Superiours and Judges. Yet this man of Moral Honesty, has the Ingenuity to object them afresh, without taking notice of my Answers, or letting the Reader fo much as know any fuch Satisfactory Anfwers, orany answer at all, had been already given.

14. As for the three Propositions pickt out of my Books apart from the Context, and which, as taken in the precise words in which they were exhibited, were cenfur'd. I defire the Reader to reflect, that these words [There is no God] tho' found in the Holy Scripture it felf. yet ar feparated from the words adjoyning, and exprest

in those precise terms, are perfect Abeism, and deserve the highest Censure; and yet the same words as they lie in the Sacred Book it felf with thefe foregoing words [The Fool bath faid in his heart] joyn'd with them, the direct contrary is fignify'd by that place. This was my very cafe. The words or passages taken alone, without the Prefaces. declaring the lole Intent of the Author, without the State of the Question, and other Paragraphs (or words in the same Paragraph) giving light, by the Tenour of the Discourse, to my true meaning, bore a shew as if I had affirm'd that it was requifite to Faith to demonstrate the Mysteries of Faith, and among them the Supernatural Infallibility of the Church, which is a Point of Faith. Effecially fince there was inferted by the Exhibiter a Parenthefis in the middle of the second Proposition, The speaks of Propolitions of Faith whereas there was not a word of any fuch thing, but about * fifteen times the contrary, is the felf-fame Paragraph: viz. That I spoke of Motives, Premisses, and Grounds of Faith. Now the Censurers knew not that those Propositions were in any Beok, or had any Antecedents or Confequents (as they* publickly declar'd, and I have it under their hands) and, consequent ly, Cenfur'd them; as my felf should have done, had I been in their Circumstances, and circumvented as they were. As foon as I faw the Cenfure, I offer'd voluntarily to Subscribe to it; knowing that those Propositions thus fingled out, were no more my Doctrine than [There is no * See Vindi- God was the Senfe of the Sacred Writer; nay * quite contrary to it. The Censurers declar'd they were surprized, and * complain'd they were by indirect wiles impos'd upon. So at the Arch-Bishop of Paris his Command I writ my Vindicie, to manifest the true Sense of those passages as they lay in my Books; which I shew'd very clearly and particularly to be, that I only spoke of Faith an freeding under a Rule aftertaining it's Descent from Christ. My Books

being

Vindiciæ J. S. p. 33. 34.

* Ouerimonia J. S. p.70. and 75.

Ibid. p. 67.

ciæ J.S. p. 4. 5. 6. 7. Querim. P. 74.

being in English, it was order'd that some Persons of great Learning and Repute who understood English should examine and testify, whether, taking those Propositions as they lay in my Books, the Orthodox Sense I affign'd to them, were indeed my genuine meaning in * App. feu those places; My Adversary too *allow'd of them to Quer. p. 76. attest it; for indeed their known Probity and Learning 77. was fuch that it was impossible to except against them; and that Venerable and Pious Personage, Abbot Monta. Ibid. p. 62. en, to whom they were known, it being requir'd, gave Testimony to both those Qualifications in them. They Ibid.p. \$7.5 all unanimously attested by their Subscriptions, that the Orthodox Sense I affien'd was indeed the true meaning of those Places; and that the Sense condemn'd was not in those Books, but the direct contrary; whence follows that when I Subscrib'd the Censure, I subscrib'd only to what had ever been my own Dostrine. Those Reverend and Judicious Persons, were Mr Francis Gage, Dr. of Sorbon: Mr Thomas Godden, Dr. of Divinity; Mr Robert Barelay, Principal of the Scotch Colledge in Paris; Mr Bonaventure Giffard, and Mr John Betham, then Batchelours of Divinity in Sorbon, both of them fince, Doctors of the same Faculty, and the former of them now Bishop of Medaura; Mr Edward Cary, Mr Edward Lutton, and Mr. C. K. The Arch-Bishop of Paris, being perfectly sa tisfy'd, hoping it might end future Disputes, desired me to Subscribe to the Censure: I refus'd at first, alledging Ibid. p. 65. that such a Subscription might be improv'd into a pretence that I had retracted. He replied, * Uteris itaque qua * App. feu Subscriptionis formula tibi placuerit; Make ufe therefore of Quer. p. 65. what form of Subscription you please. I replied, Then I will declare that I do Subscribe, not retraiting my Doctrine but persting in it; which he allow'd; and I did it in the felf- Did. p. 77. same terms ; adding, that I perfifted in it as being the from Centure, and approv'd by very Eminent Perfonating/ack

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ages.

Ibid. p. 69.

P. 76.

ges. Which done, the Censurers were order'd nav com manded to make me Satisfaction by an Inftrument Signid by them both; declaring that no Proposition in any Book of mine was toucht by their Censure. Could there be a greater and more Authentick Clearing my Books and Doctrine from being Cenfur'd than that was ; or, might not Dr & by parity of reason as well have pretended that the Scripture teaches Atheifm, or that King David defery'd to be Censur'd, for faying There is no God, as that any Propofition, as found in my Books, was there Cenfur'd or Declar'd

Heretical.

15. And now to lay open some of the Doctor's Fallboods upon this occasion; They are these. I. That the main Defign of my Catholick Letters are there declar'd to be no Catho lick Doctrine. Well bowl'd Doctor. Have I a word there pretending to flew the Mysteries of Faith, or the Author rity of the Church [that is believ'd by Faith] that is it's Se pernatural Infallibility by Affiftance of the Holy Ghoff to be Demonstrable? Is it not shewn you in most express words (Third Cath, Letter. p. 22.23.) and in many other * Third Ca- places) that we speak only of the * Humane Authority of the Church, which is to be prov'd by Natural Me diams, and not of the other which is believ'd by the Faithfull? This then is a meer forg'd pretence against your own Conscience and perfect Knowledge 2. That I was Cenfur'd and retracted: whereas his manifest not any thing as it lay in my Books (that is indeed nothing of mine) was Cenfurd; nor did I fubscribe, otherwise than as not Betrading my Doctrine, but perfifting in it as being free from Centure. This the Arch Bishop of Paris allow'd, and the Censurers themfelves judged to be fuft and True, and upon those terms acquitted me and made me Satufaction. 2. He fays, that if this (the Sense Condemn'd) be not Catholick Doctrine, he is Infallibly Certain my Letters are far from being Cazbolick

tho. Letter. p.23. l. 11.12. Ibid. p. 22. L. 32. 33.

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tholick in their Senfe. Now, not one word is there in those Letters which is the Sense Condemn'd, as I shew'd lately; however I am glad he who has still been so high against all Infallibility in his Writings, and deny'd it to the Catholick, or any Church, owns it at least in Himfelf. I fee now what Grounds he went upon when he would not make a Candid Retractation of his Irenicum. Cerminly this man would perfuade us to take his word for our Rule of Faith. But the ill luck, is his Infallibility is evidently prov'd already to be willfull Forgery, against plain and Authentick matter of Pact. He fay? the A. B. of D. averrs many fine things already answer'd, and that my Plea was ridiculous. Which is false for any thing he or I know. For, that Illustrious Personage deny'd that Book of Lominus to be his, or did any man own it; but it came out furreptitiously without the Approbation of any man, under an unknown name, nay, without so much as the Printers name to it; which was punishable by the Laws there. Whence we may judge of our Drs. fincerity: In his Second Letter to Mr. G. p. 8. by putting Herefis Blacloans in the Margent over against his Appeal to F. W. He hinted, that that Venerable Person was Author of that Book. Beat off from that False and Ungrounded pretence, he has found us another Author for it; and I expect in his next piece we shall have a Third or Fourth; according as his fancy, so heated now that it has shaken off all regard to Civility, shall prompt him. Again, he shews us how wonderfully ingenuous he is, by his quoting against me the railing Book of an unknown Adversary, which had besides all the Marks of a Libel in it; and overflipping the Atteffation of Eight Worthy Divines of great repute; who, openly and owning their names, did witness that those places, in my Books, did not bear the Sense in which those words pick't out thence were cenfur'd.

cenfur'd. Add that Dr. St. knew all these particulars were clear'd fatisfactorily, fince it appears (by his quoting them) he had read my Defences, in which they are printed at large. Which Common Sense may affure him I durst not have done, in the Life-time of all the Persons mention'd and concern'd, without quite losing my Cause; Nay I should have expos'd my self to new Accufations as a Falfifier, had I not dealt fincerely to a tittle, and preserv'd all the Authentick Originals in my own hands, for the Justification of my Defences, which I yet have. I charge the Dr. then, to have publisht a. gainst me Willfull and Notorious Falfboods, which he had reason to know to be such. Yet we are still to think he did all this out of his pure Love to Mozal honelly, of which he makes fuch a Saintly Profession. I Challenge him moreover to shew me any one Catholique Writer of any Eminency (I do profess I do not know so much as one of any degree whatever) whoever Cenfur'd this Polition, that the Infallibility of the Churches Humane Authority, antecedent to Faith, and deriving down Christ's Doctrine might be demonstrated; which is all Cath. Letter. I require in my Catholick Letters. Whereas the * Right Reverend F. W. has named him divers, both Ancien and Modern, who follow that Method in general: and I have quoted * divers Eminent Controvertists as oc casion serv'd, and particularly insisted on *two beyond all Exception, F. Fisher here in England, and Dominical de Sta Trinitate, who writ and printed his Book at Rome, and had it approv'd by the Magister Sacri Palatii, who take the same way I do, almost to a tittle. I may add, to the Drs. greater confusion, the Authority of the Arch-Bishop of D. himself, and of all those Eminent Persons who have approv'd my Doctrine, as shall be feen hereafter.

16. Not a man then has Dr St. on his fide, but one unknows

P. 14.

* See Third P. 21. 22.

* Declaratio Sergeantii. p. 40. * App.p.209. ad p. 246.

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known and altogether unapprov'd Author Lominus, and a bitter Adversary to me besides; out of whose Falsboods, interlarded with his own, and by his Concealing my Replyes to all he objects (and those such as fully fatisby'd my Judges and Superiours) he makes a shift to patch up his Calumnies. We will fee next, whether (to his further shame) my Books or Doctrin have not had Testimonials of greater weight to approve and authentisure them, than that of Lominus was to Condemn them.

17. In the first place that Blessed and Glorious Martyr, the Illustrious, and Eminently Learned Oliver Plunker, Arch-Bishop of Armsgband Primate of all Ireland, asfoon as he heard my Books were oppos'd, out of his meer lustice, love of Truth and the Esteem he had of my Doctrin, unfought to nay unthought of, fent me out of beland, an Approbation of it writ with his own hand, and Seal'd with his Archiepiscopall Seal, in these words. Infrascripti testamur, &c. Wee underwritten do attest that Sergeantis. mehave read thorough diligently and accurately, and that p. ss. with both Profit and Pleasure, three Books writ in the English Dialect, Publish'd by that Learned Person Mr. Fohn Sergant, whose Titles and Arguments are these; Surefooting in Christianity, Faith vindicated, and Reason against Raillery; In which I have not only found nothing against the Integrity of the True Faith and of good manners; but, moreover, Clear and Solid Principles, which admirably conspire to the Efabilbing and confirming the Catholick Doctrin. For both by Reasons and Authorities they excellently impugn the Prote-Rants affirming the Holy Scripture is the only Rule of Faith; and vigorously maintain that the genuin Doctrin of Christ and his Apostles has descended, by the force of Tradition, from Centary to Century, may from year so year, incorruptedly to our time, and fill remains inviolably in the Orthodox Church. In skimony whereof we have subscrib'd, and have caus'd our portatil

Declaratio

portatit Seal to be affect; this 15th of March 1674.at Atmagh Oliberius Armachanus, totius Hibernia Primas.

Can any man imagin that this Grave and Learned Personage, who had for twelve years profest Divinity in the Sacra Congregatio at Rome, and had been advanc'd by them to this high Dignity, would have hazarded his Credit there, in approving so highly the Writings of one who was a Stranger to him and no ways capable to oblige him, had he not been perfectly affur'd there was nothing Censurable in them? Yet, this, tho' known to our ingenuous Dr. is nothing with him. He crys still Lominus forms money, let him be what he will; and affures the Reader upon his Moralt Honesty, he is Infallibly Certain.

Reverend Personage Mr. Peter Talbot Arch Bishop of

my Doctrin in my Letters is not Catholik. 18. The next in Dignity is that Illustrious and Right

Dublin, who dy'da Confessor of the Catholik Faith in Dublin Caftle in the time of that truly Hellifb, tho' not Popifb Plot. This Eminent Person more than once has ap-*A Sovereign prov'd and highly commended my Doctrin. * [The Asthor of Surefooting (fays he) has with great zeal writ divert Treatifes of this matter (viz. the force of Tradition) and has overwhelm'd those who defend only Morall Certainty in Faith with fo great Confusion that they can no way clear themselves from the blemish of Atheifin, to which their Principles and meer Probability of Faith lead; of which crame the forefaid Author proves them Guilty beyond all pollbiller of Reply. And Thid pion 30 a little after, he acknowledges that the Rule of Faith (viz. in our Controversies is the Humane Authority of the Church;

and, that it must be an Infallible Directres; otherwise it might lead us out of the way. Unfortunare Dr. St. to quote an Authority against me, which so highly approves by Doctrine and condemns his as leading to Atheism? The Reader may hence discern how likely tis the Archbishop of Dublin should be the Author of Lowinns his Book,

where

Remedy against Herely and Atheism. p. 28. See my Declara. P 95.

where he and Dr. Tillosson are praised for Writing so * Hares. Bla-Catholickly against mee; whereas that Right Reverend Prelate so highly extolls my Books as writing so unanswerably against Them. Lastly, in his Appendix to that Book of his cited above, he has this folid Discourse. * Declaration * Altho Tradition does not demonstrate or conclude evi- p. 99. dently the Divinity of Christ, nor consequently can demonfrate or conclude evidently that the Revelation of our Faith was Dibine; yet 'tis a Conclusive Argument ad honinem, against Protestants and all those who acknowledge the Divinity of Christ, that Goo reveal'd all the Articles which the Roman Catholick Church professes, in regard they acknowledge Christ to be God. And thus the Author of Sure-footing, Faith Vindicated, Or. argues invincibly against his Adversaries for the Conclusive Evidence (by the force of Tradition) that God reveal'd all the Articles of the Roman Catholick Faith, out of the Supposition that Thrill is God. Note that this Appendix was write purpolely to clear me, after the Conference in Abbot Montague's Chamber: where tho' I would not then answer to propositions taken out of books, when no Books were there to clear them by the Context; Yet, after I had the Objections in writing, * Querim. p. I did answer them; and this to the * Satisfaction of 81. & Declathe Arch-Bishop himself, and of * Dr. Gough who was * Declaratio; present, and prejudic'd formerly against my Writings. p. 69. 79.

19, I had compriz'd the Sum of my Doctrine into a short Treatife, Entituled, A Method to arrive at Sasufaction in Religion; which when I was at Paris I tranlated into Latin, and shew'd it to that Excellent Prelate the Bishop of Condom; my singular Priend and Patron, defiring his Judgment of it. He read it, and at my request made his Exceptions; which being clear'd by me, he askt me why I did not Print it ? I reply'd I would, so his Grandenr would please to give me leave to Dedicate it to himself. Which obtain'd, it was pro-

pos'd

pos'd to the Sorbon for their Approbation of it, the former of them (Monsieur Pirot) testifying is contain'd nothing a gainst Faith or good manners, & the later of them (Dr Gage) added that the most certain Rule of Faith was in that Treatise exactly settled and invincibly defended. But still obscure Lominus is worth twenty sorbons in Dr. Si's. Learned Judgment. Tho' its here to be observed that the Bishop of Candoms Approbation was antecedent to theirs; not only as allowing and orning the Book, but as inviting me to Print it.

20. I alledge in the Fourth place the Testimony of my Superiour here in England, Mr. Dunpfirp Elice, an Ancient Dr. and Professor of Divinity, and late Dean of our Catholick Chapter; whose Sanctity of Life and folid Judgment gave him a high Efteem with all that knew him. This Grave and Venerable Person, besides the Ordinary and Customary Approbation of my Books, added that They do clearly demonstrate, out of the very nature of Ecclefiaftical Tradition, that the Doctrin delivered by Christ and his Apostles, was inviolably conserved in the Roman-Catholick and Apostolick Church even to this Age in which it now live; and by Irrefragable force of Reason did evidenth convince the Grounds of the Hereticks (meaning Dr. St. and Dr. Till against whom I had writ) to be meer Tricks and vain Fallacies. But Still Lominus (that is the Lord knows who) is Dr. St's. only Saint and Infallible Oracle.

the Judgment of that deservedly Esteemed, and Learned man, Mr. R. H. Author of The Guide of Controvers. This Excellent Writer, though he inclines rather to the School-opinion of the sufficiency of Moral Certainty, yet, like a truly ingenuous and Charitable man, preferring the Common Good of Christianity before his own prevate Sentiment, after having discourst according to his own Grounds, he, in allusion to my way of proceeding, subjoyns

subjoyns these words: [But then, if any, after all this, ear make good any farther Certainty in such Tradition; I know no Party, if Chillian, that has any Interest to oppose him — The stronger any one can make this Faith, they have all reason to like it the better.] By which 'tis apparent that he is so far from condemning and censuing the way I take, that he declares 'tis not the Interest of any Party, if Christian, to oppose it; and that himself and every one ought to like it better than the other way, so it could be made good. And, that it can, my best Reason tells me; since, as appears by my Method, it has born the Test of being reduc't even to Self-Evidence; and the miserable shifts and Evasions, to which the most Learned of our Adversaries are driven, to avoid it's force, do more and more assure me 'tis not at all hard

to compass it.

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22. In the last place, to omit many others, I shall put the Testimony of that very Reverend Person F. Martin Harney, Dr. of Divinity of the University of Lovain, and Principal Regent of the General Studies of the Order of St Dominick: Who being askt at Rome (where he was at the time of the Contest) his Judgment of my Doctrin, comprized in my Method, and of the Sense of the three Propositions, as they lie in my Books, gave under his fland this Testimonial of both. I under written have attentively read the Method writ by Mr John Sergeant, and bis Vindication of the three Propositions pickt out of his Books; and I have found that the Method is found Dottrin, and wefall to reduce many to the Catholick Faith. And in bis Vindiciæ 'tis plainly demonstrated that the foresaid Propositions, 48. written by the Author, do make a Sense altogether Orthodox. This Reverend Person I had never feen, nor heard of; nor could any thing but the love of Truth move him to this Approbation; nay, he must have lost much Credit with the Sacra Congregatio, had my Doctrin been prov'd Unorthodox, or the Propositions in my Book, (as Infallible Dr. St. affirms) Heretical. 23.

23. Modesty forbids me to mention the excessive Encomiums of that Eminent Controvertist Mr. Edward Worsley, a Father of the Society; who, though utterly unknown to me, took such a Friendship for me upon the reading my Books, and in all places where he came ex. toll'd my poor Endeavours with fuch immoderate Expressions, that to save my blushes in rehearing them I intreat those who have the Curiofity to read them in my Declaratio from p. 73. to p. 78. I flew'd them to the Right Honourable the Earl of Castlemain, who was pleas'd to do me the right to attest them to be his hand writing. The same noble Personage & as many as knew F. Worley, will, I doubt not, do that right to his Memory, as to witness for him that as he was Second to none in ability to diffinguish between Sound and Tainted Doctrine fo his fincere Candour and Integrity fet him as far above the humour of Flattery, as my Meannels could incline any to it.

24. The Sum of my present Defence is this. Eight Divines of great Repute appointed by the Arch-Bifhop of Paris, and admitted by my Adversary himself, do unanimoully attelt that the Sense condemn'd is not in my Books, but the contrary. My Judge clears me, the Confurers are commanded to make me Satisfaction. Highest Tribunal allows my Plea, and acquits me. Primates, Arch-Bishops, Bishops, the Sorbon, Eminent Divines, and even those who take another way in their Writings, approve and commend my Doctrine, and most of them in very high and extraordinary expresfions; my own Superiour does the fame; nay even those, who were formerly highly prejudic't, declar'd themselves satisfy'd in it. So that poor Dr. St. is lest alone to ballance against all this weighty Authority, with one Lominus, a meer Utopian, or Man in the Moon; on whose sole no-Authority he grounds all his sensels Calumnies. Calumnies. Was ever weak man so baffled! Add, that he knew that all these Defences of mine had been made and accepted many years ago, and those Authorities altedg'd, and my Doctrine thus approv'd and clear'd; yet he had not the Candour to let his Reader have the least hint of any of those particulars; which argues not too great love of Moral Honesty. Nor does he take off any one Answer of those many I had given; but only says over again rawly some sew things objected, reply'd to, and printed source years ago; and plays upon a double sens't word or two by applying them still to wrong Subjects. which is in effect to tell the Reader he must either talk insignificantly against evident matter of Fact, or say just nothing, and to confess in plain terms

he is at a perfect Nonplus.

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25. To close this present business I desire the Reader to reflect that those Judges, Approvers and Commenders of my Books and Doctrine, liv'd generally in divers and fardistant Nations, were of different Faculties and Univerfities, of different Education, different Orders, and (to fome degree) of different Principles and Interests; some of them of flight acquaintance; divers utterly unknown tome, or I to Them. So that, 'tis impossible to imagine that any thing but the Force of Truth and the Integrity of my way of proving the Certainty of our Faith as to it's being taught by Jefus Christ, could make them conspire to allow or abermy Writings fo heartily and unanimoufly. Nor could there be any Human inducements to make them fo partial to a private man every way inconfiderable, and of no Esteem at all but what my Writings and Principles gave me. Whence, though no one Church, as Dr. St. weakly objects, has ever own'd my Dottrine (to give formal Approbations of Controversial or Theological Writings not being a work proper for Churches) yet, the Dignity of the Persons and all these Circumstances confider'd,

fider'd, I conceive it may amount to the full weight of the Judgment of any one particular Church whatloever. that my Doctrin is Sound and Orthodox. Nor will he. I believe, find that any work of a particular Writer hath had more Authentick Testimonials for it, than my poor Endeavours have had; except that of the never-enoughpraifed, the Bishop of Condom. And 'tis not the least Confirmation of their Integrity that they have been twice brought to the Tryal, (at Paris and Rome) and nothing unfound found in them. Though I must do the Doctor the right to acknowledge he has spoke one (and hitherto but one) true word: but he is to be pardon'd for prevaricating from his constant method of speaking Falshoods, for it was at unawares, and he knew not he did fo: The Truth he spoke against his will was this, That I hardly escaped Censure at Rome: and therefore, to make his words good, I'le tell him how it was. All my Books were sent thither to Cardinal Barberin; and amongst them one written by the Right Honourable my Lord Chancellour Hyde, in defence of Dr. St. against Mr. Creffy; pretending (the Title of this last being torn out) they were all writ by the fame Author, my felf: There went with them a delire to His Eminency, that, not to give them the trouble of Peruling them All, he would cause only this last of my Lord Chancellour's to be read; and, by the Character he receiv'd of that, to judge whether all the rest writ by that Author ought not to be Condemn'd. He gave them to an English Divine to keep, who knew nothing of the Contest; ordering him to read only That, and give him a faithfull account of it as foon as he could. While he was reading it, God's Providence so order'd it, that an English Gentleman, his acquaintance, came accidentally into his Chamber, and finding all my Books on his Table, askt how they came there? He, hearing mee nam'd as their Author, admir'd,

and faid he could not believe they were mine; in regard he had heard I was a Writer for Catholick Faith; whereas this Author was of far other Principles. After some peruling it, my Friendfound it was my Lord Chancellour's Book foifled in for one of mine. Which underfood by my Friend's Testimony and the finding all the other Books to run in a quite different strain, they inform'd the Protectour of the Fourbe that was put upon him, and so my poor Books escapt scot-free. By this or fome fuch Stratagem they might perhaps have been condemn'd, but that there was any danger of it when my Defences were feen and compar'd with the Accusations, Infallible Dr. St. is the first man that ever inform'd us. But, what would we have from a man that can scarce

speak a word of liquid Truth!

26. But, tho' Dr. St. has neither manag'd this invidious Cavil Solidly, nor (he must pardon me) honestly or justly, according to any Moral Honesty but his own, which he has told us he fo loves: Has he at least deserv'd the Commendation given to the Unjust steward; has he done wifely, or, in any degree, prudently? Let's fee. In his Irenicum, he * had Sacrificed the whole Order of Bifbops to * Answer to the pleasure of the Magistrate or the Mobile, and actually de- a Letter agraded them into the rank of Presbyters; or, to give us a Lowth, in Demore compleat Map of that ill Book, that he had given fence of Dr. us there a curtail'd kind of Episcopacy coldly and faintly at- St. p. 8. Ibid. p. 7. low'd, Presbytery strongly pleaded for, Independency much favour'd, and (fays my Author) if my Memory fails me not, in the matter of Tithes a spicing of Anabaptistry and Quakerifm. One would think by this description the name of that Book should be LEGION, and that such pestilent Principles were needfull to be retracted. It feems the Bishops who were most concern'd, durst not attacque fuch a numerous Army of private-spirited Enemies, drawn-up into one Body. For himself affures us that

to M. Lowth's a Letter against Mr. L. p. 8.

* See Answer *the Bilbops and Regular Clergy treated him with more kind Letter. p. 22. neft then fo much as to mention any fuch thing as a Recantation. * Answer to Nav, his Vindicator tell us moreover that *the Prudent and Reverend Governours of their Church did admire the Performance. Well! But what provision was made in the mean time against the mischief and Scandall? Could this man have done the Bishops a greater disparagement, than to tell the World they preferr'd a Personal Civility and a Complementary virtue before the care of Christs Institution, and their own most particular Interest? But, tho' they were over civil to him, why had not he the Goodness by a voluntary Recantation to give a stop to the spreading that contagious Doctrin, if indeed he did not hold it still? He could not think it pleas'd them, nor that their shews of Kindnes were real and hearty. However his Vindicatour Brags they made choice of him to undertake the Defence of the Conferences with F. Fifber. Yet fo, fays the other, as Mr Prynn, a man of a restles Spirit and unsettled judgment was put to the Records in the Tower to employ his bufy mind. Well, but how came he off with that Task? A fair occasion might have been taken there to fet all right again, had the Dr. pleas'd. But he was fo far from that, that Mr. Lowth tells him. It would have discompos'd the Arch-Bishop upon the Scaffold, had he foreseen he should have had such a Vindicatour: and that he finds little amends there for his Irenicum Doctrins, but rather an Evident Confirmation of them, if not doing worfe. This is still more and more obstinate; and a kind of buffing those, who had so over-civilly forborn. him, by doing still the same or worse. Yet afterwards, I know not how or why, he made some ambidextrous Retractations, which left all understanding men diffatisfy'd, as well as Mr. Lowth; tho' be, about to publish a book of Church-Government & the Irenicum Doctrines croffing his way hapt to be the fole man that oppos'd them publickly,

Thid p. 8.

Ibid. p. 34.

lickly, tho' multitudes of the most hearty, most Learned, 1bid. p. 37. and most Eminent Protestants utterly dislik't them. But, first he writ to him civilly and upon honest Conditions would have wav'd him. But the Dr. had got too much head by this kind Connivence, and so he could get no other Anfiver, but Scorn and some foul play; The two main Ingredients in the Doctors Constitution, as my self too trequently experience. Hereupon that honest and plaindealing Gentleman, whom all true lovers of Christ's Inflitution and particularly all genuin Members of the Church of England ought to respect for his undaunted love of Truth, and firmness to Church-Principles, did animadvert upon him feverely; as an incorrigible Answer to Wronger of fuch Sacred Concerns deferv'd. He demands Mr. Lowth. in behalf of the Church he would make a Recantation as Publick as the Errour, Scandal and Offence had been. The Doctor fetts on a Jack Pudding to abuse and scoffat him; * Pottscript one (fays my Auther) who has * hackney'd out himfelf to to an Answer write against his Conscience and Judgment, as appears by to a Letter his own Letters. A fit man for Dr. St's purpose. This plea- against Mt Lowth. fant Gentleman pretended fuch a Recantation was already made. To which Mr. Lowth's Vindicator (a person of a folid judgment and moderate temper, and, as is feen, p. 23. a kind Friend to Dr. St.) reply'd, that all amounted to little better than a fay fo. He shews that what is cited out of the General Conferences was a fourty palliation of the matter. That his Book [The Unreasonableness of Separation] lignify'd no more than Motives to compliance in the Judgment of Interest or Discretion; and for the most part might be urg'd for any fettled Constitution, even that of Beneba or antderbam. That any man might get eafly off what He had faid; and each Party, as the Tide turn'a, might apply them to their own advantage. That the Doctor though he pretended Mutability of Church Government in bis Irenicum, yet be bad perpetually fixt the Presbytery by Divine Right Unalterable. That

P. 14.

P. 4.

P. 15.

P. 13:

That the Recantation was far from hearty; in regard that, altho' his Vindicator freely confesses the Fault, and Mr. Lowth to be in the right, yet He with the fame breath reviles him. Lastly, to omit many other particulars, That (which I have most reason to resect on) the Dean, when he speaks of Church Authority, takes away with one band what P. 33. 34. he gives with the other; That the Authority of (meerly) propoding matters of Faith and ofreiting men in Religion, is no Authority at all; nay that they rather imply a Dower in those to whom they are propos'd, at Discretion to refet them: and that it makes the Church'es Authority, precarious, and lays her open to all manner of Hereticks. This is what I ever judg'd lay at the bottom of his heart; that in things belonging to Faith, he fets the judgement of every one of his Sober Enquirers above the Church'es. Which made me P. 133. 124 reflect fo severely upon it in my Errour Nonplust, and in divers other places of my Third Catholick Letter. But of late, the juncture (as he hopes) being more favourable, he is gone beyond his former felf; for in his Second Letter to Mr. G. he confidently affirms that every Sober Enquirer may without the Thurch'es te'p find out all neceffary Points of Faith in Scripture. Now, Proposing and Directing are some kind of Help, but here they are both deny'd it feems; and all Help from the Church, as to the matter of faving Faith is deny'd. This then feems to be the Antecedent Belief the Dr. fets up, and thence inferrs, That a man * See the Answer to a Let may be in a State of Salvation in his single and private Capaciter written ty apart, and out of all Church Society and Ecclesiastical Comagainst Mr. Lowth. p. 23. munion, tho' he live where it is to be had; which (fays the Answerer) utterly overthrows all Church Government, This ought to give every honest man who loves Order and Government (of what Judgment foever he be) fuch grounded Jealousies that he is letting up a Babel of No-Church-men against Christ's Church, that no satisfaction competent, unless the several Propositions be extracted out of his

Books,

Books, and either formally and expressly retracted, or elfe that he shew that, as they ly in his Books they bear not that wicked Sense they seem to do, neither of which has been done. Nay, left he should deal slipperily by Come mon and palliating words, at which he is very expert; it will be farther requifit that he be oblig'd to write against those ill Tenets himself, and offer convincing reasons to prove them False; that so men may see it comes from bis heart. And this done and the Interest of Truth once in demnify'd, he is one of the worst Christians who refuses to honour him far more than if he had never lapft. Si non

erraffet, feceratille minus.

27. What concerns Me particularly is to note hence the prodigious Imprudence of Dr. St. in objecting against me Self contradictions, which have long ago been clear'd and the Diffatisfaction of two or three Roman-Cathon licks (for I know of no more) who became well fatisfy'd when they had read my Books, and compar'd them with my Explication; and when as He knew my felfafter a fevere Trial was clear'd by my Judges (which he will never be :) and during the time of it, when it was most dangerous for any to stand up for me, my Books and Doctrin were most authentickly approv'd nay highly commended by most Eminent Authority: What a madnels was it for him to object fally and against evident matter of Fact that I retracted, Whenas all the while! he knew himself had had the misfortune to have writ fuch unfound Doctrin, that his Vindicator is fore't to comfestit as his best Plea, that be has retracted it; and yet tho', as 'tis faid, he has done it on his fashion, he is still apprehended to be so hollow, that he cannot yet gain the Belief to have done any more than palliate his gross Errours; to be inconsistent with himself, and to take away Answer to a from the Church with one hand what he gives it with the other . Let. against Mr Louth. p.

Of these things he never yet clear'd himself, nor can; but 13. 23. 14.

is still accused of harbouring the same Errours in his breast, nay to grow still morse and norse. Which I was so tar from desiring to lay open, that I civilly infinuated it atar off in my Third Catholick Letter, p. 20. without so much as naming his Person; that I might keep him from such Impertinent and Extrinsical Topicks, which the Reader may observe, do, for want of better, make up three quarters of his Controversial Writings.

SECT. II,

How Dr. St. Settles the true State of the Controversy.

28. T Have been longer about this First Section than feem'd needfull. But the Influence it has upon our future Difpute will recompence my trouble, and excuse my Prolixity. The Second thing his Method leads him to (for hitherto it has led him quite out of the way) is to fate the Controverly. And to this end, he acquaints us with the Occasion of the Conference; which was that Mr. G. affirm'd in some company that no Protestant could show any Ground of Absolute Certainty for their Faith; and that Mr.T. had promis'd him that if Dr. St. were not able to manifelt the contrary, he would for (ake his Communion. Will the Dr hold to these words? 'Tis plain here that Mr G. demanded he should shew Grounds to ascertain his Faith absolutely. Mr. T. expected he should manifest they had fuch Grounds as did ascertain their Faith; and, if he could not, was to leave his Communion: Laftly, that Dr. St. by accepting the Challenge, became engag'd to fatisfy Mr T's. expectation, and to manifest the contrary to what Mr G. had afferted; that is to manifest he had Grounds of Absolute Certainty for his Faith; or, (which comes to the same) for Christian Faith upon his Grounds being

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being taught by Christ. And, how did the Dr. acquit himself, and perform this? Why, he affign'd Scripture for the Ground or Rule of his Faith, and Univerfal Tradision for the Proof of the Books of Scripture. All the company knew this before. For, both fides knew, held and granted already that the Book of Scripture was prov'd by Universal Tradition, and every one knew too that Dr St. would affign It for the Ground or Rule of his Faith. Wherefore, unless all the company were out of their Wits, furely fomething more was expected; and what could that be, but that he should manifest his fatth was, absolutely Certain by relying on that Rule, or that the Rule he affign'd, gave him, and his, Absolute Certainty of their Faith, or of those Tenets which they held upon it. For, it being agreed on both fides that the Sense of the Scripture was in it felt True Faith, Gods Word, and as such to be embrac't, the only Question was of the fense of scripture as to us, or as to our knowledge of it: And of This the Dr was to shew and manifest he had Absolute Certainty by any way his Grounds afforded him; otherwife, he might fall short or be wrong in the knowing Scriptures Sense (that is, in his faith) tho' the Letter were never fo Certain. Again, by his counterposing to those words of his [than you can have for the points in difference between as] 'tis manifest the contest was, whether he had Absolute Certainty of those Points he held upon bis Rule. What fays the Dr now to this plain fate of the Controversy?

29. First he changes the Ground of Absolute Certainty for P.15.1.32.ult. bu Faith into proving the Absolute Certainty of the Groundor & P. 16. 1. 1.3. Rule of his Faith: which transposes the Terms of the Question, and alters the whole business. For Absolute Certainty for Faith engages him to shew the Doctrin or Teners of Faith to be thus Certain; whereas [Absolute Certainty of the Rule of our Faith] makes Absolute Certainty

less the pretended Rule proves a good one, and renders

the Doctrin of Christian Faith, confisting of many partienlar Points, thus Absolutely Certain; which himself will tell us afterwards, he will not stand to. Next, he Equivocates in the word [scripture] which may either mean the Letter, or the Sense of it. Now the Sense of it being Faith, 'tis That only could be meant by Mr. G. and of which it was affirmed he could not shew Grounds abfolutely ascertaining it; The Sense, I say, of Scripture, could only be question'd fince the Letter was agreed to. Wherefore to alledge Tradition for his Proof of what his Grounds will not allow to it, viz. to bring down the Sense of Scripture or Faith, and turn it off to the shewing Certainty of the Letter, which was out of Question, is a most palpable prevarication. 3. He quite forgets to shew that any Point of his Faith or all of it, (speaking of the Controverted or Dogmatical Points as we do) may not be False, notwithstanding his Proof for the Certainty of its Letter: which if it be, 'tis not Faith; unless he will say the Points of his Faith may be so many Untruths. 4. It has been prest upon him over and over in * my Catholick Letters to shew how his Rule influences his Assent of Faith with Absolute Certainty. It has been inculcated to him how both [Rule] and [Ground] are Relative words; and, therefore, that he could not pretend they were to him Absolutely Certain Grounds for his Faith, unless he shew'd how they made him Absolutely Certain of that Faith of his, which was the Correlate. Which tho' the most material Point, and most strongly prest upon him, he takes no notice of in his whole Reply; and it shall be feen that, when he comes to touch upon that Point (after his fashion) hereafter, he is forc't to confess they are no Absolutely Certain Ground or Rule to him at all. Laftly, that, when (Faith being Truth)

First Cath. Letter. p. 22. Third Cath. Letter. p. 66. 67. 68. 69.

Truth) the Question was whether he had any such Ground as could conclude it True that Christ had taught his Faith, and consequently whether he has any Faith at all; he flips over That, and rambles into a Discourse about more or les Faith in Scripture, instead of shewing he had any. Other shifts he has, but thefe are his masterpieces: So that his whole performance, as to the Conference, amounted to no more, than to take up the Bible in his hand, and cry aloud [Look ye, Gentlemen, here is my Ground or Rule of Faith; and your selves must confes tis Absolutely Certain; and, therefore, you cannot deny but Thave Shewn you the Ground of Absolute Certainty for my Faith.] But if it should be reply'd: Sr, an Arian or Sosinian might do the same, and yet no by-stander be the wifer for it, or more able to differn which of you has Christs true Fairb, which not; in regard that must be decided by shewing who has an Absolutely Certain Means to know the true Sense of the Letter; the Drs infignificant Principles carry no farther, but (as we shall see anon) to confess plainly neither of them have any fuch Means of Absolute Certainty at all. And that he cannot manifest what was expetted of him and he stood engag'd to manifest.

30. The case then between us being such plain sense, what says the Learned Dr to it? Why, besides his rare evasions lately mention'd, he tells the Reader vapouringly his way of reasoning was too hos for Mr. G. which I have shewn to be frigid Nonsense. He complains that our obliging him to prove or shew clearly what belong d to him sfor no body held him to Mood and Figure) is like the Trammelling a Horse. That we infinuate Mr. G. is Nonswitted, which is far from True. He is peevishly angry at the Metaphor of Playing at Cards, and persecutes it without Mercy; which is a scurvy sign that, however he pretended to a Purse full of Gold and Silver, he is a Loser; and that he will be put to borrow some Ci-

P. 16.

P. 17. Ibid.

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fations out of Authors to combat the Council of Trem hoping to recover by that means some of the Credithe has loft by the Nonplufage of his Reason. He pretends he Ibid. gives us good fecurity: that is, for the Letter of Scriptures which was not the End of the Conference, nor is our Question; but not the least security for its Sense, or Faith, P. 18. which was. He talks of Declamations and the Schools in the Savoy; and glances at my pretending to Intrinsical Grounds which is to maintain that Humane Authority (which is the only thing I was to prove) is to be believed blindly, whether a man fees any Reason why he ought to believe it, Ibid.p. 18. 19 or no. He talks too of the Cardinals in the Inquifition; who, tho' my Just Judges, were my very good Friends. He fays my Grounds had fav'd the Mariyrs Lives, and he makes a rare Plea for them out of my Principles: Forgetting, good man, that we are writing Controverly to fatisfy men who are in their way to Faith; whereas those Bleffed Martyrs were not only already Faithfull, but moreover liv's up to Chrift's Doctrin; and, fo, had Inward Experience in their Confeiences of it's Sanctity and Truth. He imagins the Fews who fan our Saviour's Miracles had no In P. 19. trinsick Grounds. Whereas True Miracles being evidently above Nature, are known to be fuch by comparing them with the Course of Natural Causes, known by a kind of Practical Rvidence or Experience: And must I be forc't to render him fo Weak as to inftruct his Ignorance that the Knowledge of things in Nature is an Intrinfick Ground, and not Extrinsical as Testimony is? He sticks close to his Friend Lominus, right or wrong, in despite of all the Evident and Authentick Testimonies to the contrary; whom before (for want of others to fecond him) he split into Two, and now multiplies into the Lord knows how P. 30. many. To gratifie file Friend Dr. Tillerfon, and excuse

his, and his own filence, he fays Phave retratted the main Principles in Faith Vindicated and Reason against Raillers;

which

which, in plain terms, is an Unexcufable Falfbood. To explicate two or three words, and shew by Prefaces, States of the Question and many Signal passages they were Mifunderstood and apply'd to wrong Subjects, (as I did to the fatisfaction of my Judges, and even of prejudic't perfons) fignifies plainly not-to retract them : Nor shall he name any one Learned and Orthodox man of our Church who fays my Explication is not Gennin and Sincere; whereas I have nam'd him many, Eminent in both those Qualities, who have attefted under their hands they are fuch. He ends with bidding the Reader judge what J. S. has gotten by the Confession of Parties. As much as in Modefly he could have witht; as appears by the Approbations of his Books and Success in his Suit. What Dr. St. has got by the Confession of his Party, may be seen by an Eminent man, not writing in hugger-mugger and Difpuife, but owning his Name, viz. that he * is accus'd of * Answer to Mr. Lowth. having Mountebankt and Quackt for full five and twenty P. 17. years. And these wretched bifes he has thought fit to use here to avoid the Point, lets us fee he has not left it yet. Noram I to expect he should easily quit fuch an Inveterate Habit, grown into a kind of Nature by a five and twenty years Cuftom and Practice.

ar. Now comes the State of the Question, as his Second Letter has craftily put it; tho' I conceive it was best Stated by shewing the Occasion and fole End of the Conference; to which I will hold, nor will I be beat off from it by any Excursions either then or fince. There was Question then put to Dr. St. in these words, Whether you are absolutely Certain that you hold now the same Tenets in Faith, and all that our Saviour taught bis Apofiles. I thought I did well in putting him to answer directly that, He was. He fays by my favour he us'd other words. And what were those! Why, instead of the Same Teners in Faith, and Athar our Saviour taught to his Apofiles, he amwer'd [A

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the same Doctrin that was taught by Christ and his Apostles. There's a Cloud in this carriage of his, it being against the Clear way of honest Nature. Was the Position asit lay in the terms of the Proposer, true; and, fo, to be gransed? Why did he not grant it then? Was it Falle? why did he not deny it? Was it Ambiguous? why did he not the Proposer being present, desire him to explain it? No neither. None of these plain and common Methods would please him. What then? He would needs change the words of the Question in his Answer. And by what Rule? Was his Answer the same in Sense with the Queftion? If not, his Answer was no Answer to that Oneflion, but the faying another thing on his own head. If it was the same Sense, why did he not speak to it directly in the Propofers words? The reason he gives is, because he's afraid of Orall Tradition left it should vary the Sense. Whose Sense? The Proposer's? His Sense was fixt inde terminate words, and if it were not known, the Doctor might have known it if he had pleas'd. He means then his own Senfe. What? must he put what Sense he thinks fit to the Question? This is a quaint way of Answering. And why should not the Proposer fear, as himself did here, left by changing his words, as he did enormoully, he should change his Sense too? But this Orall Tradition like a Spright fo haunts his Fancy, that all along (as shall be seen) he either starts perpetually into Excursions and counterfeit Mirth, or stumbles into downright Nonfense. And this I believe verily is the General reason of all his failings: But we are now to feek out his, particular reason of changing the words here. The last words that differ in the Question and Answer can break no squares, for Christ and his Apostles agreed well enough; and that Heavenly Master of theirs taught them All Faith either by Himself or the Holy Ghoft Sent in his name. The danger then must be in these words [the same Tenets in Faith] which

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which he changes, for his fecurity, into [the fame Do-Grin Because the word [Doctrin] fignifies all in the lump (as * he expresses it) to shew which he hop't it *Second Let) might be sufficient to shew the Book of Scripture; ter to Mr. G. whereas the Plural word [Tenets] might come to oblige him to shew how he has Absolute Certainty of each or any Point in particular, to which he has a great Antipathy. And, accordingly, when he came to perform this, he shang'd again the Absolute Certainty of Faith into Absolute Certainty of Scripture. I answer'd. They held more to be of Faith than that the Book fo call d is Scripture. He first trifles that we mean more than is contain'd in Scripture; contrary to our express words, where there's not a Syllable of containing or not-containing all Faith. However, if Imean his affent to Points of Faith contain'd in Scripture; he promises a full Answer afterwards : which we impatiently long to fee. Only we intreat him, because 'tis a-far off, he would not lofe Absolute Certainty by the way; nor. fool our expectations when we come at it, by letting the full Answer promist us, vanish away into a flat denial he has any such Certainty of those Points at all.

32. I argu'd ad hominem that, fince he confesses Tradition causes Certainty, it makes Faith as Certain as Scripture : He feems to confess it; but denies we have fuch an Universal Tradition for our Tridentin Faith. As if the Faith come down by Tradition were not the same before and fince that Council; or that the Tradition we build on did not confift of fuch a vast Body of Attesters as were able to evince the truth of a plain matter of Fact, unless those who had renounc't Tradition did club to it's Certainty. But is it not pretty to observe that he pretends not to hold Faith to be Certain by our Tradition because tis not Universal, and yet at the same time disputes and gainst Tradition's being a Certain Deriver of Christ's Faith even tho'st were Universal! For, his Principles allow

low no more hand in our Faith to Universal Tradition. but only to bring down the Book of Scripture, and then make that Book the only Ascertainer of our Faith. He threatens to thew the Tridentin Council had not Universal Tradition for it's Decrees; and to give us a taffe before-hand of that Treatife, he adds, Let the matter of Tradition it felf, as a Rale of Faith, be one of those Points Well shot Doctor! The Points he speaks of here are expreft to be Points of faith; and the Tradition we defend in our Controversy at present is the Human Authority of the Church, which we make to be the Rule to thole coming to Faith; and foit is Antecedent to Faith and the Object of pure Natural Reason: And does he in his Great Learning think This is a point of faith? Or is it not possible to keep this roving Pen of his to any thing? But he designs to prove this mighty Advantage of his Caufe, and that no Catholick Tradition can be produc't & gainst his Church in any one Point of the Additional Creed of Pins IV. Suppose it could not; has he therefore prov'd he has Absolute Certainty of the Faith he holds, in case we could not prove some other Points which we hold? Yet he has undertaken at all adventures this Great Defign, and will fuddenly publiff the First Part; and, if God gives him Life and Health (he should have said, Principles too) he hopes to go thorough the reft. As much as to fav, he deligns to leave the Certainty of his Faith in the lurch, to tell the World publickly he has done so; and, if God gives bim Life and Health, will continue to run away from that troublesome Point as far as ever he can. He should first have answer'd Error Nonplust, and clear'd himself from being a Man of no Minciples, before he can be fit to impugn others; unless he thinks a man may dispute mitbout Principles; as I verily believe he does; for his odd Methods of Reasoning and Answering need none. 33. But tho' he has the ill luck to many Principles,

he is, for all that, a good man; and desires no more to end our Controverses but to make Salvation our End, and the Scripture our Rule. But, if there be no Means to come at the Sense of Scripture in those most important Articles with Absolute Certainty, many may come (as Millions have done) to Mifunderstand fuch places, and thence to embrace a Grand Herely instead of the Chief Points-of True Faith; and does he think Heretical Tenets in such concerning Points, is faving Faith. Let him shew that his Principles lay fuch Grounds as absolutely secure the Truth of Faith, e're he talks fuch Pious (or rather Persitions) Nonsense of a Saving Faith. For, should it hap to be False (as by his Grounds it may) 'tis neither faith, nor the means to Salvation. He pretends I exclude ill from Salvation, who do not penetrate Intrinsical Grounds: But, 'tis a flam of his own coyning. Errour P. 143. 144 Nonplust has long ago told him over and over, that 'tis though they adhere to a Rule that is fettled on Solid or Intrinsical Grounds, and so cannot deceive them, tho' they do not at all penetrate, or (as he calls it) dig into the Intrinsical Grounds, why that Authority or Rule is Inerra-He. Let the Truth of Faith be secured, and they have what's fimply requifit to Salvation; unless they be such persons as speculate or doubt, or are to defend the Truth of Fairh against Herericks, and thence come to need a teper Inspection and Knowledge of the Reasons which wachade their Rule does absolutely secure the Reliers on it from Breot. Cateram quippe turbam (as St. Auftin fays Contra Ep. Fund.) non intelligendi vivacitas sed credendi implicit as, tutissimam facit. For as for the others which are the outgar, they are render'd absolutely secure, or out of capper of Erring, Dot by the Sagacity of Understanting has by the simplicity of Believing.

34. I know not certainly what past at the Conference, bour which he still keeps such a do. I is high time to leave

T. 24.

leave it off and-follow our Point. Things should have been better manag'd to give us a clearer light; for want of which we are forc't to trust the Dr himself, tho'a party, and accept what he represents in his Second Let. ter to Mr G. Only I fee it was confest on all hands that the fole End of it was that Dr. St. Should manifest be had Grounds of Absolute Certainty for bis Faith ; and to that I will stick, and Level my Discourses accordingly. The Dr is at his old shuffle again, of Scripture's Letter being certain and containing all; neither of which are to any purpose, since neither of these reach his Faith, which is an Affent to determinate Points. I alledg'd that the Certainty of Scripture was not the Point for which the Conference was. He asks bow Iknow it? By the very words that express it, put down here and acknowledg'd by himself p. 15. But Mr G. knew it not. That's more than I know, or the Dr. either. It appears not what use he would have made of it after he had propos'd some Questions to gain light what the Drs. Principles were; for the Dr. himfelf confesses Mr T. cut off his Discourse by declaring him felf fatisfied, and asking Questions of his own. But Mr. G. loft the Point by asking Questions about the Rule. Not so neither. For he was well acquainted with Common Sense, which told him the word [Rule] isa Relative word; and, fo, is to regulate us about the particular Points of Faith, which it relates to; and that, unless it does this, 'tie good for nothing, being meetly ordain'd for that End: which Dr. St. either knows not, or will not feem to know; left he should come to be engag'd to shew how his pretended Rule influences any one Point with Absolute Certainty; and yet, if it does not this, 'tis no Ground for the Absolute Certainty of his Tenets or Faith. He fays that by the Scripture they are to judge what they are to believe, what not. By which we are to understand that he has shuffled away from shewing

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P. 26.

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his Rule to be a Qualifying Principle, which is to give his Paith Abjolute Certainty, to the making it a Quantitative Measure shewing what's Faith what not, or bon much is of Faith. It seems Quantity and Quality is all one with him; and he would be Meafaring his Faith, before he knows he has Any. As for his Containing Faith fo often shown to be an inlignificant pretence, let him know that between his having the Letter of Scripture Containing all, and the Doctrinal Points, (which is truly his Faith) there intervenes a Quality in the Rule called Clearness, or Plainnes; and fuch a one as is able to secure the Reliers on it that what they receive upon that Rule is not an Errour, or a Herefy, which is against Faith. 'Tis this he is to make out. and prove that this Clearness is found in his Rule apply'd to all fincere feekers after Faith; and, till he does this, 'ris a phrenzy to maintain those men can have Absolute Certainty of Fuith by means of Scripture's Letter. Yet hold him close to this plain Point, and he'l complain he's trammell'd, he should say, grawell'd. But he fays, he must not come near any one Point of his Faith, because being to bew be he'd All the same Doctrin, orc. the word [All] made it necessary to affign a Rule in which All is contain'd. Now I verily thought that All fignify'd Every one, but his Discourse makes it fignify No one: Again, how shall we know he holds the Same Doctrin, as he in his Answer pretended he did. without particularizing the Points held? By this Discourse the Arians and most of the Hereticks since Christs time held the Same Doctrin he taught; for they all held the Scripture's Letter to be Certain, and that it contain'd their Faith; yet tell him this a hundred times over, and demand how this is a particular Rule for his Protefrants, which is a Common one to all Hereticks, he is full deaf on that ear. Laftly, fince Faith is Truth, inflead of a Rule containing All, he should have assign'd a Rule aftertaining

wining it All to be Tele, and that none of the Tenets be bolds to be in Scripture are Heresical. But he thanks you he'll not burn his fingers with handling fuch bor Points He alledges that the Mofaicall and Mahometan Laws are refolv'd into the Book of Mofes and the Alcoran. But apply this to our Point tis as wide from the purpole as what's most. Had there been such High and most Import tant Misteries contain'd in those Laws as there are in the Christian Doctrin, deliver'd down and profest openly by those Bodies from which multitudes had taken the Liberty to recede by reason of the Obscurity of the Letten of those very Laws; in that case, there ought to havebeen some other Rule to secure them from mistaking that Letter, and able to give them its true Senfe; and, therefore the Certainty of that Sense being their respective Faith, would necessarily have been refolv'd into fuch a Rule, in regard the Letter alone could not give and afe certain it. And 'tis to be remark't, that all Dr Se's Infrances. Parallells and Similiaudes which show prestily and look fine and gloffy, when they come to be apply'd to the true Point, do still mils of being furable in those very particulars which are only to the purpofe.

formance of showing his Faith Absolutely Certain, to which he promised a full Answer formerly. He begins with telling us that The safe in not the same as to Partheuter Paints of Faith with that of the General Grounds of the Certainty of Faith with that of the General Grounds of the Certainty of Faith with that of the General Grounds of the Certainty of Faith. And what sthis to say, but that since the General Grounds are held by him to be Absolutely Certain and so cannot be False, the Particular Paints of Faith, (nin. the Trinity, Christ's Godhead, ere.) are not in the some but a morse safe and so may be False. A fair, or rather a very foul Concession! Yet he not only says it, but with prove it too from Jew's having Absolute Certainty of all contains din the Basis of Mosses, and get not bearing it as to

P. 27.

P. 26.

fuch a particular point, wir. the Refurrection. I would gladly know if that point be contain'd in those Books? And, if it be, how he can be absolutely Certain of All, (that is of every Point,) contain'd there, and yet not be thus certain of That Point the contain'd there. I ever thought that Omnis and Aliquis non had been Contradictories; and had all the Logicians in the world on my fide in thinking fo : and if the Dr. have not invented a new Scheme of Logick of his own, fitted purpolely to maintain Nonfence, and can with his great Authority make that Logick good in despite of the whole World, he speaks Flat downright Contradiction. Perhaps he may mean his Jew (or some other man who is not a Jew,) may have Absolute Certainty that those Books containing all his Faith were writ by men divinely inspir'd. And this he may have by the Testimony for these Books, tho' he can neither read, nor understand, nor ever heard read any one word in them: And has not this Man an incomparable Certainty of his Faith, that knows no Faith at all? Is not this to make a man Absolutely Certain of he knows not what? Yet, this it feems is all the Resolution of Dr. Se's Faith. But this is not the work; for not knowing the Contents of a Book, is a kind of Innocence in comparison of holding many wicked Herefies by Mifunderstanding it. Which tho he fhould do, (as do it he may, for the Drs Principles give him no fecurity from doing it) his very Herefies, tho they be all the whole rabble of them that have peffer'd the Church fince Christ's time are resolved into the Selffame Grounds, as the Drs Faith is: For, all those Hereticks believ'd the Scripture to be the Word of God, and believ'd all that the Scripture contain'd to be of Faith : whence they had all Faith in the tump, (as he expresses it) and forhad good Title to be parts of Dr si's moticy aff Comprehending Church. If he denies it, let him thow a lollereason by his Principles why they should not; no Shadow

fladow of which I could ever difcern in him yer.

36. He flides from this point, which he had no mind to come near could be have avoided it, to divers forts of particular Points; meerly that he might have a flow of faving something. For he knows well, and it has been told him above twenty times, we only speak of such Dogmatical Tenets as have been controverted between the Church and her Deferters: and, not to name All, we use to instance in two Chief ones, The Holy Trinity and the Divinity of our Saviour. But, here our rambling difputant is taking another vagary quite out of the road of the Question. Lominus has set him so agog that he has quite forgot the thing we are about, nay even that we are writing Controverfy. He is turn'd school Divine on a fudden, tho' he is so utterly Ignorant of it, that he cannot diffinguish between Comrover (7 and It. He will needs fall to treat of Faith as 'tisa Theological Virtue; and not only fo, but moreover (that he may flow us how manifoldly he can miftake in one Single Point) of that Vir tue as 'tis in the hearts of those who are truly Faithfull already, and have besides, well cultivated their Souls by the Practice of Christ's Law. Whenas all this while he knows we in our Controverfy are only treating of Fairb as tieprovable to those who are looking after Paith, that 'tis Christ's Doctrine taught at first. Tell him of this five hundred times and make it out never fo clearly he runs counter still and takes no notice of it. He was to write a Book, and without miftaking willfully all along, he faw he could not do it in any degree plaufibly. After many fruitless attempts to hold bim to the true State of our Controversy, which is about the Rule or Ground of Faith as to our knowledge, it occurr'd to me that nothing could fetter him to it more fast, than to mind him how his Friend Dr. Tillation, whole Book he approves does himself state it. * [When a quire

F. 37.

quire (fayshe) What is the Rule of Christian Faith? the * Rule of meaning of that Enquiry is, By what Way and Means the Faith. p. 6. Knowledge of Christ's Doctrin is convey'd certainly down to us, who dive at the distance of so many Ages from the time of the sire that our Controversy presupposes Faith as 'tis Divine, and treats of it only as 'tis Derivable down to us at this distance; and, therefore, since the Knowledge of the Certain Means to do this, is, in our Controversy, antecedent to the Knowledge of Christ's Doctrin or Faith, it must be manag'd by Maxims of pure Reason.

P. 28,

37. This Point then feitled, let us trace our Prevaricatour in his wandrings. He tells us very gravely God is not wanting by his Grace to make (necessary) Points known to men of honest and fincere Minds. What we demand of him is some Natural Medium or Argument within our ken, concluding that what's beld by him now is Christ's Doctrin. He confesses he has more (for he mocks at Conclusive Evidence) but pretends God's Grace will do it for him. We tell him that, without fuch Conclusive Reasons to prove our present Faith to have been taught by Chrift, we cannot maintain or make out that our Faith is True. And he tells us God is not wanting by his Grace to make necessary Points known to Men of honeft and fincere minds. And what man living has the Courage to affault an Adverfary that comes Arm'd with such a Supernatural Logick! Now all this, were it levell'd right, as 'tis not, is meer Peritio Principii; and, begging the Question; for it supposes Scripture's Letter Interpretable by Private Judgments is the Rule, which he was here to prove, and to she w us how. it preserves those who rely on it from Errour. For, otherwife, if it be not the Rule, did God even promife. his Grace to those who leave a Clear and Conclusive way to follow an obscure and Inconclusive one? Did God's Grace ever make a Conclusion follow which did not follow,

or make the Terms cohere which were Incoherent ? Or keep those from Errour who took a Way, that, for any thing he has prov'd to the contrary, facilitated men to fall into it? Certainly, never was God's Grace so abus'd to a wrong end, or call'd-in at a dead lift like fome Dearl machina to fave his Credit for bringing never an Argument that is worth a Rush. Yet, 'tis pleasant to fee where a clutter he keeps about the Donum Intellett's and Lames Fidei, both which presuppose Faith and the Way to ir. whereas all his work was to prave the Certainty of this Later. In this lamentable condition he has left bis Rule, recurring to Invisible Gifts (the true blew Fanatick Method) inflead of producing open Arguments to prove it has any power to regulate men in their may to Faith. Proceeding upon this gross and wilfull shuffle he makes a fine flourish of our School Divines who have not one fingle word of the may and Means by which the knowledge of Christ's Doffrin is convey'd down to us, which is our present Point, as his Friend * Dr. T. has told him: And then he concludes like a Triumphant Heree that I am a Stranger to the Dattrin of our own Church, or an obfit nate Oppofer of it. Alas for him! He obstinately opposes while he cires them, the known State of the Question; and is fuch a Stranger to School-Divinity that he cannot diflinguish betwixt That and controvers; and when he is taken tardy thus miferably, he thinks to falve all with Swaggering and Vapouring.

P. 33.

P. 28.

* Rule of Faith, p. 6.

38. At length he sums up his Performances with impertinent distinctions of all the things he is Certain of. As, 1. That he is Absolutely Certain that whatever God reveals is True. Who denies it; or what's the Certainty of God's revealing to the Certainty of his believing right, unless he be absolutely Certain that the particular Points he holds, were indeed revealed by God, or (to speak more pertinently to our purpose) were taught by Christ and his Apostles?

Mobles? 2. He is Abfolutely Certain of bis Rule, and it's containing all negeffary Points. And what's he the better for Certainty of This, if still he remains uncertain of all the particular Articles he is to believe by it? 3. That God's Grace is requifit to Fairb formally Divine; which is granted: but what's this to the proving it by a Natural Medium to have come from Christ, as he must do to diole who are in the Way to Faith? Conclusive Evidence must be produc't for this, or the Proof must fall short of concluding (whether we have Grace or no) and fo leave it Usprov'd and Uncertain. 4. He fays, Parskular Points of bath are more or left Certain, according to the Evidence of their Deduction from Scripture as the Rule of Faith. This only feems to touch the Point in hand, and it touches it very gingerly. Let him foeak our and sell us whether he in Absolutely Certain of all particulars of his Faith, nay wen of a Trinity and Chrife's Godhead by his Rule; of whether any man living is absolutely Certain of them by in Principles? If not, then all Faith may be a Lying Story for any thing he or any man elfe can tell. And that this is his true Tenet is evident by his omitting there P. 33. 1. 18. when he comes to speak of Particular Points, the words & 16. Modutely Certain which he put to the two first parts of his Division. Nor do I like his expression of [more or les Cortain Tfor fince any Quality is more or left fach, by having lefter more of the Opposit Quality mixt with it, it follows that this his [more or left Certain] must mean flefor more Uncertain Mrange Language for a Christian to use when he is speaking of All the Particular Articles of his faith, and what Certainty is to be allow'd for them! And yet he calls this, the forting this Controverly about the Cortainey of Faith in it's true light. A pleafanter fest than which was never fpoke, were northerhing in it felf fo pernicious.

SECTIL

How Dr. St. Answers Our Reasons produc't against his Grounds of Certainty for his Faith.

39 I TE proceeds next to answer my fort Difcourfede I monftrating that He, and those of His Principles, could not be Sure they had right Faith. I prefum'd he could not do it : he favs he has : Let's fee which of us is difappointed. It confilts of five plain Propolitions. 1. God has left us fome Way to know furely what Christ and his Apofles saught. 2. Therefore this Way must be fuch that they who take it, fall arrive by it at the End it was intended for that is know furely what Christ and bis Apostles taught. 2. Scripture's Letter Interpretable by Private Judgments in not that Way & for we experience Presbyterians and Socimien (for example) both take that Way, yet differ in such big Fundamentals, as the Trinity & Godhesd of Christ. 4. Then fore Scripture's Letter Interpretable by Private Judgments is not the Way left by God to know furely what Christ and his Apostles taught, or firely to arrive at right Faith. 5. The forethey who take only That Way, cannot by it arrive (well at right Faith; fince tis impossible to arrive at the End, with out the Means or Way that leads to it. The Reader may know that this very Discourse, in Substance, was propos'd to him many years ago by a Worthy Lady, of whose fincerity I believe himself does not doubt. He made a rambling Discourse of his own against it, unap pliable to any Proposition in it. The Lady, having a high opinion of Dr. Se's parts, judg'd it impossible a man of his Learning should not be able to give an Answer to few Lines in fo long a time; not reflecting how con nected Truth hampers an Adversary, and is perfectly Unantwerable:

Imanswerable: So she prest vehemently for a Second & a Distinct Answer. After some tedious expectation he fends another, more infignificant, if possible, than the former. Which feen, and the Lady now fatisfied that he (upon whom the most rely'd) had done his utmost, she alter'd her Judgment; upon no other inducement than the feeing plainly that his Principles refolv'd all Certainty of Faith finally into the Private Spirit : The Drs Refetter was fet on, like an unexperienc't Perdu Souldier, to combat it with a distinct Answer: but alas! he was P. 16.17.80 shown to falter or fallify in every particular. This ill fuccels, made the Dr. grow wary in speaking to any particular part of it; but thought it fafeft here to stand aloof. and throw stones at distance, instead of grappling with it neerer hand. His answer is, that it proceeds upon two Falle Suppositions, and Overthrows the Possibility of any Rule of Faith. My first Falle Supposition is, that there is no Certainty without Infallibility. No True or Absolute Certainty, good Dr. For, as for your Morall Certainty it may be Fallible enough. I must confess I hate such nonsense as to Tay I am perfectly Gertain of a thing yet peradventure I am deciev'd.] The word [Ab olute] fignifies Perfect; and Certainty, if True, is taken from the Natures of the Objects or Things without us; and if they stand perfectly engag'd by True Knowledge of them, they would not be what they are, if when we truly conceive them as they are, our Conception or Judgment of them can be Falfe, that is, if it be not, in that particular, Infallible. This is plain Sense, and told him long ago. It has been demonstrated also in * Faith Vindicated that True Certainty & Infallibility were all one. What answers he? Why, he makes as if he had never known or heard of our Arguments for it; but falls to talk of the * Stoicks Marke, Epicurus his fooleries: He learnedly mistakes the Definition, [Man is a Rational Greature] for a Demonstration, and diflikes it at the same time.

P. 36. 37.

P. 35.

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n' ly k: time. Laftly, he tells us many other things the Antients held or faid; which are nothing to me, who judge I know what belongs to Certainty and refolving of Truths into their Principles, as well as they did; and do think them very weak to stand disputing with the perfect Scepticks or convincing them by Criterions; because all Discourse supposes something Certain to build upon, otherwise it might go on endlessly; that is, would be to no End; and the Scepticks admitted no Certainty of any

thing at all.

40. His Application of those Preparatives is, that we are to expect no Absolute Certainty in proving the prefent Faith to be Christ's Doctrin. And so he hopes to fave his own Credit for producing none, let the Credit of Christian Faith, and the repute of its being an Absolutely Certain Truth go where it will for him. However, to a void the shame justly due to such a Position, he must cast in some good words to fool his Readers; and, so he grants that they who use due Care and diligence may attain to a true Certainty and fatisfaction of Mind as to the fence of Scripture. But he never attempts to flow that possibly they may not do so, but may hap to fall into damnable Herefies as the Socinians do; who, for ought he or I know, us'd as much Care and Diligence, as he and his Party use. Again, what means Satisfaction of Mind ? Is Faith ever a jot more Certain or True because some may be Satisfy'dit is? Are not the Socinians as well fatiff'd in mind that Christ is not God, as the Dr. is that he is God? Moreover; if the Argument he brings to prove his Faith to be Christ's true Doftrin, does not conclude, 'tis a thoufand to one that Acute and Intelligent men will find the flaw in it? And what can those men do in that case, so they be true to their Reason, the only Light they can jet guide themselves by? Must they Affent that his Faith came from Christ, when they fee that, not with standing

P. 36.

all the Proof he brings for it, it may not be Christ's, and bezard to Embrace that Doctrin for bir Faith which may, for any thing they know, have the Father of Lyes for its Author? They must Sufpend then in that case, and justify themselves by alledging that the best Arguments, the most Learned Christians bring to prove it, conclude nothing; Nay 'tis to be fear'd they will difgrace the Faithfull as a company of Fops, for believing upon weak Grounds; and, by showing them such, lay a just Scandall upon the Christian Church for pretending to bold what Christ taught, when as yet mone in it are able to prove it was his Doctrin. And how would they laugh Christians out of Countemance, if, proceeding on Dr Sr's bort Grounds, they should only show them a Well-Attested Book containing those Doctrines, without ascertaining absolutely the true Sense of it, when as only that Sense was the Doctrine of Faith; and, which is worke, when they faw multitudes of numerous Sects at perperuall and irreconcileable variance about that Sense! The true Rule of Faith then must be fuch as fets Faith above any Peradventure of not being Christ's true Doctrin, and fo, secure all who rely on it, how weak soever, from being deceiv'd or in an Error; and, withall, it must be such as Intelligent men, feeking for affurance of Chrift's Faith, may be satisfy'd it is able to conclude it to be such, and the more Learned Faithfull Evince to Doubters and Convince Opposers, that the Faith held now by themselves and the Church is the Self-Same that Christ and his Apostles taught at Firft. But Dr St. daies not affirm any of this of his Rule of Faith; therefore his pretended Rule is none. His Inftance of True Certainty attainable without Infallibility in that point of Faith, viz. That Jefus was the True Meffins, is partly answer'd in my Fourth Catholique Fourth Letter; and his alledging it has one strange inadver- p. 25, 26. tence in it, which I wonder he was not aware of, which

is, that the Proof of it depended on the Interpretation of Scripture. He had it feems forgot that to manifest himself to be the true Mellias, foretold by the Prophets, was the main Point of our Saviours Doctrin: and that he did Miracles to attest that Dodrin, and make himself known to be that Person; which sofracles were Infallible Marks that that Doctrine of his in that point was True. And, when the Dr. produces Miracles to abet his Private Interpretations of Scripture, then he may have a fair pretence to lay afide the Publick Interpretation of the Church. Again, he is quite out as to the Subject of his discourse : For tho' it was a Point of Faith in the Jewish Law that a Mellian was to come; yet that this very Person, Jelus Chrift, was to be that Meffias, was no Point of Faith among them; and God's Providence, we lee, took a far better way to make it out than Private Interpretations of the Scripture; unless he thinks Miracles, no more Effectual nor more Certain than private Interpretations are. What infignificant nothings this Man brings for his choice Arguments, and what pains he takes in the worst cause in the world. To maintain that Christian Faith needs not to be Absolutely Certain? And this, for no other reason (for 'tis every Chriflian's Interest it should be so) but because his bad Principles can afford him no Argument to prove it to be fuch.

41. His Pretence of my Second False Supposition, (viz. that a Rule of Faith, according to me must be a Mechanical Rule, and not a Rational) is weak beyond expressioner Every Schollar knows (his Friend Dr. T. particularly who took the same way and us'd the same expressions, Rule of Faith. p. 4.) that Metaphors are translated from Materiall to Intellectual things, in regard we have no Genuin Conceptions of these Later; (and indeed, most of the Language of Christianity is made up of such expressions,) whence we can argue, by Analogy, from the one to the other. The word [Rule] is one of those Metaphorical

words:

P. 37.

words: and, hence we fay that, as a Material Rule is that by which if we draw our Pen, it direds us to make a Right Line; fo, the Rule of Faith, being intended by God to direct us to Truth, will lead those Right who follow it and regulate themselves by it. Does not this Metaphor look a little more Proper, and the Discourse upon it hang better together than his likening Scripture to a Purse? yet he utterly dislikes it, and tells the Reader I fally suppose the Rule of Faith must be a Mechanicall or Carventers Rule with all its Dimensions fixt ; and denies that himself supposes it to be such a Material or Mechanicall Rule: Nor any man fure that were not flark Mad. Again, do we here meddle with its Dimensions or bow much is of Faith, as he did when he spoke of his Rule? The Straightness of the draught, preserving us from the Obliquity of Errour, is the only point we aim at. Next, he denies there is any fuch Intellectuall Rule, because there may be Miftakes in the Understanding and Applying it, and therefore Care and Diligence and Impartiality are requir'd, else men may mis. How? Mistho' they follow it? Then it felf was not Straight; and, fo, no Rule: For the very notion of a Rule is to be a Thing that has a Power to regulate or direct us right, or keep the Understanding that follows it from milling; and to follow it is all the Application it can need to do its Effect. Whence, all the Care and Diligence and Impartiality he speaks of, must be employ'd in feeing they do indeed follow it : for none of these can help or hinder the Rule in its Power of directing; fince it had this of it Self, independently of the Perfons. But his Rule, tho' all these (as far as we Mortalls can discern) be us'd by the Socinians in the following it, still suffers those Carefull, and Diligent and Impartial followers of it to err in Faith ; Therefore 'tis no Rule of Faith. But 'tis mighty pretty to observe that when he is pincht with plain Sense he ever and anon runs to the old .

P. 37.

P. 38.

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old Philosophers; who he says, would have laught det me P. 37. for applying a Materiall Rule to Intellectuall things. Sure he's not well awake. I draw a Metaphor indeed from a Materiall Rule to an Intellectuall one, and then apply that Intellectual Rule to Intellectuall things; but I know none to mad as to apply a Materiall Rule to Intellectuall things; unless he thinks I am measuring Faith by a Taylors Tard, or finding out the right Senfe of Scripture by a Ruler and

a Ruling pen.

42. But, why Presbyterians and Socinians? This infinuation (fays he) has as much folly as Malice in it, and makes as tho' dute of the Church of England were Sociaians in these points, viz. The Trinity and Godhead of Christ. God forbid I should be so injurious to them. I doaffure him and them faithfully I intended it as a piece of Juffice to them; and put in Presbyterians instead of Protestants because I had reason to hope those private-spirited Principles were none of theirs, and that divers of their Eminent Writers had own'd the Univerfall Tradition and Practice of the Church for their Rule of interpreting Scripture: Andl. have fone Ground to think they might in time have profest it publickly, had not Dr. Se's Trenicum-Doctrines ! * Answer to fill'd that Church with men of no fleady Principles - and made

a Letter against Mr. Lowth. p. 6.

P. 38.

luke warm Persons flock into it corrupting it's Body,-by which means there have been in the Church of England lo few Church-of-England Men. But, why fo Cholerick? Why fuch wincing and kicking? I do affure him I did not think I had in the least toucht him. If he be fo over-apprehensive and angry withal, I fear he has done himself more wrong in taking it to himself than I ever intended him. Again, what means he by Toller of the Church of England? I am told by a hearty Member of it, and one who owns his Name too, (how true it is let the Dr's Conscience look to it) that * he is contented

* Answer to Mr. Lowth's Letter to

Dr. St. p. 13. to fit and fing in the bearing Branches of that Church, folong

as he fills his Pockets; but, when the gathering time is over, it to be cut down as that which cumbereth the Ground, By which he fees that he must either clear himself by a candid and full Retractation of his ill Principles, or he will have no Title to the word [Mer.] But we are come forwards to his farther Defence of his Rule, or rather to his overthrowing the Absolute Certainty of Christian Faith; in order to which he asks, How can Reason be Certain in any thing, if men following their Reason can mistake? Very easily. Becaule Reason is a Faculty or a Power, apt to be actusted by True or False Principles; and, accordingly, 'tis Determinable to Truth or Fallbood. But, if Reason follow any Maxim, taking it to be a Principle to fuch a thing, and yet errs in that thing, then that pretended Principle is no true Principle. Yet, fays he, Men following the Rules of Arithmetick may miftake in casting up a Summ. And carl he feriously think that a man who casts it up Falfe, does hot decline, while he thus miftakes, from Arithmetical Rules? May he not with as good Sense say that Two and Three do not make Five? for all Rules of Compuration hang together by the fame necessity. In a word, his Instance falters in the Third Proposition, wis. That Two who have made use of the same way differ at least a bundred is casting up the Sum. Which is Falle; and by altering the Terms irregularly, he hinders any Conclusion from following. Falfe, because, no two men can differ in a Sum, unless they wrong or abuse the Rules of Computation. Irregular; because, instead of the words [who take that Way found in his Second Proposition and in our Discourse, he coggs in the words [make use of that way] which are not fo express in sence as the word [Take] is, which imports following whither it leads, or making a right wfe of it. And it would have been too palpably abfurd to fay a man takes a way who leaves it; as an Ill-reckoner must needs leave the true Rules of Arithmetick. But those

P. 39.

Thid.

those who both Take and Follow all along the Letter of Scripture interpreted by their private selves, and this to their power, and are skilfull in Languages & in comparing places, do yet go wrong; therefore his Way is no Way, and his Rule is no Rule. Then follows the Triumph over my Inconsiderateness in not distinguishing between the Rule and its Application; and I tell him the taking it, following it, or holding to it, is the Applying it, and all the Application it can need. Nor shall all his starting holes and tricks ever be able to evade the force of this Argument.

T. 40.

43. His Discourse of Moral Qualifications requisit to the Certainty of Faith, as to know the Sense of the New Testament, if apply'd to our present Question, amounts to this; that no man can fee the force of a Natural Dedium leading to Faith, without Humility of Mind, Purity of Heart, Prayer to God, fincere Endeavours to do God's Will, &c. So that for want of a good Argument, he has left off Disputing, and falls to Preaching, tho' he has had but ill Success in his Guildhall Sermon. 'Tis granted all these are excellent means to purge the Will from Byaffections; and, by doing fo, to leave the Understanding free to fee the force of the Proof, and thence inferr the Truth of what's prov'd or shewn to our Reason. But where's this Proof, where's this Truth all the while? Must we produce such invisible things for open Proofs? If all these Moral Qualifications be requisit (as he says) to make men Certain of Christ's Doctrin, he must prove that Himself and all his Sober Enquirers, which are the Members of his private-Spirited Church, have all thefe Qualifications, e're we or any man living can be certain they have true Faith. Again, how will he fatisfy Doubters, and convince acute Oppofers and Adversaries what is the true Doctrin of Christ? Will the alledging Invisible Qualifications do the work? Moreover, he is Certain of his Faith by his Rule; and yet his Rule of Scripture afcartains

rins none by his Doctrin but by vertue of thefe Moral Qualifications. These then are either his Rule or the best part of it. At least he maintains here they are requisit, and that otherwise Scripture is no Rule. He must then prove He has these Qualifications, or he cannot shew he has any Rule, or any Faith. In a word, we are disputing as Controvertifts, and demand open & intelligible Proofs; and he fends us to Invisible holes, which only God the fearcher of Hearts can find out; and is not this mighty Learned? I wonder how he can pretend to Convert any man to Christ's true Doctrin by these Principles. Alt he can do is to alledge and compare Texts to prove it certainly Christ's Doctrin; I but, Sir, says the other, how shall I be satisfy'd you have Humility of Mind, Purity of Heart, cre. without which your felf confess you cannot be certain of the true Senfe of Scripture at all? What Art the Doctor has to fatisfy him in this hard Point I know not. But letting the Doctor's Faith afide, what Provision has he made for the standing Visible Body of the Church to defend and maintain the has Chrift's true Faith? None in the world by his Principles, unless she can prove the has all these Moral Qualifications. So that all is left to each private man's breaft; and, if he has but see a little this good Conceit of himself, that he is endow'd with all thole excellent Virtues, and fancies that he prays better than all his Neighbours, let them be Socinians, Quakers or what you will, he is certain of his Faith meerly by vertue of this Self-conceit that he is fuch a Saint; fince by Dr. St's Principles without firm affurance that he is thus requifiely qualify d, he can never have any affurance at all of his Faith. Might he not as well have told us in one word, that Bimfelfand all his Friends are pure Saints, and know themselves to be fo, and therefore they are Certain they have thefe rare Qualifications, and by them Affurance of the Seafe of Scripture, or Christ's Doctrin; but that

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that all who do not think as they do, want those Queiff.
eations, are of the Wicked and Children of Darkness, and
fo can never have any Light to know whether they have
Christ's true Doctrin or not? This then is the rare Refolution of Dr. St's Faith. I expected he should produce
clear Arguments as became a Controvertist, and he alledges
the most bidden Means in the world as becomes an Enthusialt.

P. 14

44. Yet the force of Truth is fo great that it obliges him to confess that The Right Was will certainly bring men to their fourneys End if they continue in it. I subsume : But the Letter of Scripture Interpretable by Private Judge ments does not bring the Sociaians to their End, that is. to know furely what Christ and his Apostles taught, tho' they continue in it; whence I conclude that Scripture's Les ter Interpretable by Private Judgments is not the Right Way to know furely what Ghriff & his Apolities taught Toescape this most evident Conclusion which utter lyo verthrows his whole Caufe, he starts a fide with one [H] to the remote End [Salvation] whereas the End I spoked in my Discourse which he is now answering, was en profsty, to know affuredly Christ's Destrin: Then after a lecond If the tells us Scripture was not defen'd as an Infels lible IX as to know the Truth on Fallbood of particular Opinis one by. What have we to do with Opinions? We foeak of Points of Faith, and inflancit expression the Bleffed Trink to and the Godbead of Chrift. Are theld with him but Opinions ? Indeed, I have reason to doubt that all Points of Faith are but Opinions with him, have he ought to doubt they are on may be worse than a pinions, via. Heretical Fallboods, unless he thinks himself absolutely Centain of his Moral Qualifications for us those, it mems, must do the dead when all he guments fail. As for Infalthilles there was no such word un my Disquese, and he ought to answer my Angua

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ment in the words I put it; and not to fart into luch Evalions and Logomachies. Tho' the allowing of Natarel Infallibility has been prov'd against him by Reafon and Authority of those even of his own Church, he never answers it, but barely says over again, there is no such thing as Infallibility in Mankind but by Immediare Divine Affistance. Yet he had the boldness or Forgetfulnels to fay, p. 5. that If this be not Catholick Doctring then I am Intallibly Certain J. S's Letters are far from being Catholick in their senfe. It feems than either fome men are Infallible, for feriously I take Dr St. to be a Man; or he fancies himself to be something above the Herd of Mankind: or elfe flicks not at the Blasphemy to entitle the Bleffed Spirit of Peace to have inspir'd him with

fuch a quarrelfome Falfbood.

45. He discourses against Tradition as 'tis Prattical; but has he faid any thing against it as 'tis Oral? the force of which to clear Christ's Semie delivered down in the Church confifts in Catechizing, Preaching, dilating upon the Points, and explicating themselves at large; replying to difficulties, and accommodating their Discourse to all the Learners Exigences; All which is found in the Living Voice of the Church and her Pastours, (as * I shew'd him at large) and none of it, in the Letter Cath Letter, in a Book. What answers he to common Sense and to p.6.7.8. his own Experience too when he infructs others? why he purs us off fill with this frigid Cuckoo Antwer, that he is of another Opinion, that writing is as plain as speaking; and that words written have as much (he ought to have faid as Clear) Senfe in them as words fpoken. Which, apply'd to our cafe is most palpable Nonsense, and makes all Explications frivolous, and all Catechizers and Commentators upon Scripture ridiculous. The force I put in the Practicalness of Tradition is, that, supervening to the Oral delivery, or being confomms to it, it confirms

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P. 41.

* Third Cath, Letter. from p, 6, to P, 12.

confirms it, and makes it more Visible. But he Combats the Practicalness of it consider'd alone; and so impugns his own willfull Mistake. But what says he to my difcourse? He alledg'd that Tradition might come down in Common Equivocal Words, and fo deliver no determinate Senfe. I * reply'd that 'ris inconsistent with the Nature of Mankind to mean nothing by the words they use, especially in Tenersthey were to be fav'd by; therefore the Body of the Church had fome Meaning or other of those Words, [Christ to the son of God,] and [Christ's Body is really in the Sacrament :] But this Meaning or Notion could not be a Common or General one, in regard no Notion can be common to God & a Creature to the Substance of Christs Body, & to the Substance of Bread, much less to that Sacred Substance, and some Accidents or Qualities: Therefore there could not come down any fuch Common Notion, by means of those Words; wherefore there muß have descended some particular Notion of each Point, determining the fignification of the Words to one fense or the other. This was the true force of my Discourse. I do still pretend it Demonstrable, and let him answer it when he can: for, did he know the Consequences it will draw after it, he would think it worth his while. He's at his old Logick again, which is to bring an Influnce against the Conclusion, and is very brisk that it overthrows my Demonstration. And what fays his Inftance? It fays the Corinthians and Artemonites understood by those words, that Christ was only an Adoptive son, that is a Creature; which is as much as to fay, they understood them in a Particular Sense, which is all I there pretended. And, fo, his Instance is, as he says truly, Unlucky; but 'tis to himfelf, not to mee; for it makes good my words, and instead of overthrowing, confirms my Difcourse that Men must have understood some Particular Sense by those words; and our Learned Dr is so weak

P. 46

2 W. 1411.03

as to think, that, when what he brings for an Answer is fo evidently for me, it makes againft me. As for their pleading Tradition for their Senfe; surely he means a private Tradition from some former Hereticks, and not the Publick Tradition of the Christian Church; or that their Heretical Tenets were immediately deliver'd by that United Body of Christians; for the manifest Falshood of this would have been consuted by Experience and have sham'd the Alledgers: Nor could the Church, in that case, have condemn'd them, since they spoke her sense. But the good Drimistook the Pretence of two or three quibbling Hereticks for the Universal Tradition of the Church (as wicked an Error as it was possibly to stumble upon) & then triumphs how rarely his Instance has answer'd my Demonstration.

And thus ends his Rolly to my short Discourse; which having done, he affures the Reader he has fully answer'd my main Argument against his Rule of Faith. Whereas he has not so much as touch't any single Proposition in it; & trisled, or done worse, even in the ridiculous odd way he has taken to answer it. Which confirms me more then ever 'tis past his skill to burt it, and even beyond

his Courage to grapple with it.

46. His contradicting himself is still urg'd upon him unless he can shew that true or Absolute Certainty does not
secure those who have it in any thing, from being deseived in that thing. Again, in his 15th Principle he
said there needed no Infallible Society of men either to attest
or explain the Scripture. I reply'd, that if it be Fallible,
we cannot by it be more than Fallibly Certain, and we can
bave no Absolute Certainty from a Fallible Testimony. This
seems very plain; for how should a man be absolutely
or perfectly Certain of a thing by that very Testimony
which not being perfectly Certain may perhaps deceive
him in that very Thing? His sirst Answer is, that [he
understands

Ibid.

P. 47

P. 49.

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understands no such thing as Infallibility in Mankind, but by immediate Divine Assistance.] He understands? Is that an Answer? Does he understand how to answer our many Arguments to prove it? By his not taking notice of them, we are to understand, and conclude he does Dut. Again he declares that in that Principle of his he meant there needed no Infallibility by Divine Affiftance; and he utterly denies Natural Infallibility; whence tis manifest he allows no Cortainty at all but Fallibility. His Faith is in a fine case in the mean time. He must hew I fay that Fallibility in the Testimony can ground Absolute Certainty of the thing attested, and this, tho's man fees that the Testimony and himself who relies on it may be in an Error, before he can make either the Letter or the Book of Scripture Absolutely Certain, by Tradition or Human Testimony, which he maintains here is Falible. Can a man think or say interiourly, [I am Ablolutely (or perfectly) Certain of a thing peradien ture. When that very [Peradventure] hinders his Certainty from being Abfolute or Perfett? What answers he to this plain Evidence? Or how fhews he that a feen Fallibility is abloto beget Absolute Certainty? Why, First he fays, If by Fallible Certainty I mean this and that, ou I mean? Why I mean nothing by it but that 'tis a wicked Contradiction. I mean the fame by it as I would be a hirro-corvus, a four-squar'd Triangle, Green Scarles, ot whatever fuch desperare words one may put together to compound frong Nonfenfe. How should I mean any thing by a Compound of two fuch words which the Good ness of Rational Nature, and the aversion which our understanding power has to Contradiction, has forbid any men to tile ever fince the Creation? Did the Dr. orany man living hear any Mortal man when he is about to express his Certainty of a thing, fay [Iam fallfly Certain of it?] Yet, how oft has he heard them fay, I am Infall

Thid.

My Certain of fach a thing ? whence were the word [Infallibly] a differem Notion from Certain, or Difference added to it as to its Genus, it would nay must admit the Opposite Difference [Fallibly] as is done in all such cafes: which fince it does not, without fraining nature, and the Language of Mankind, 'tis not a different Notion, but the Same with True Certainty; and therefore in proper Speech True Certainty and Infallibility are both one: Yet, after he has thus abus'd the Language of all Mankind, he has the Confidence to tell me I make use of those words in an Improper and . annfuel Senfe. This farther appears by this, that our Speculators use to add Moral or some other such Epither to ie, which are of a diminishing fignification, when they would express it's deficiency from True Certainty. This Logical Demonstration to prove Certainty and Infallibility to be the fame was alledg'd in Faith Vindicated, p. 37. But we must excuse such flight Talkers from even attempting to give an Answer becoming a Scholar to any such clofe Proofs; tho' it has been preft upon him in Cerout Ronput, p. 92. and upon Dr Tillorfon in Rea on against Rafflery P. 49. 50. from p. 64. to p. 67. He only tells us what he does own, does not own, and fuch fleevelefs fayings; that is, he on-I fays over again his own crude Tenets with the formality of a Distinction or two; and places his main hopes to uphold his Credit, not in the strength of his Anfaers, burin the Weakness or Partiality of his Readers. The upfor is, he owns clearly he has only Fallible Grounds for his Faith having been saught by Chrift; which is to affert and maintain (for it is not to be fuppos'd he will allow any others to have furer Grounds than his own) that All Orifian Frith may be Falfe, and the Ground themselves, in more Regards than one, most perfect Nonfence,

47. He proceeds next to give us his Notion of Abla-

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highest which in point of Reason the thing is supuble of, then there is that which I call Absolute Certainty. These words [Which Icall] are very Emphatical, and precisely True: for no man living but himself and Dr. T. that I know of ever call'd it so. For, suppose the Evidence be but very Right, and the Thing, as propos'd to us, or in our Circumstances, can give us no more, will this slight glimmering Evidence make us Abfolutely Certain of it? Again, Does he mean in point of True Reason inform'd by the best Maxims to direct and establish it? This is Conclusive E. vidence or Demonstration, and the Conclusion thus deduc't is Infallibly True, because the Maxim which legitimates the Consequence, is, as all Logicians know, Infallibly Certain, being a Principle of our Understanding, and Selfevident; Is it this he means? No: He does not like Conclusive Evidence in the Grounds of his Faith by no means. To come closer, I ask him, Does he mean that Tree Knowledge, conformable to the Thing, or object, fixes him in that Certainty, or (in great part) his own aiery Apprehension? If such a Knowledge, then, since none can truly know what is not, that Knowledge is as Impoffible to be False, or is as Infallibly True, as 'tis that the thing must be what it is: And if no fuch Knowledge grounds his Certainty, how is it an Absolute or Perfect one? Can his apprehending it lo make it fo? Can a man be Absolutely Certain of a Fallbood, because he apprehends that Fallhood to be a Truth, or that a thing is fo when tis not fall If not, then tis only it's being fo which can be the Ground of Absolute Certainty, and justify that Allent, and then that Affent is Infallible, for a thing & Infallibly what itis. He fay he took it to be fo, and that's enough. But, to omit that his taking a thing to be fo neither make nor prover it to be fo, I press farther: When he took it to be so, Did he take it right, or did he mistake it? If he took it right, then again his Knowledge, and Certainty grounded on that Knowledge

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Knowledge, are both Infallible; for his Knowledge when he rook it right could not but be conformable to the Thing, and the Thing is Infallibly as it is. If he took it wrong or miftook it, and yet be Absolutely Gertain of it, then again there may be Absolute Certainty of a Fallbood, or that a thing is fo which is not fo: which is a rare kind of Cerrainty-indeed, especially for the Ground of his Faith; and Posterity no doubt will owe much to his Memory for the Invention. 'Tis left then that he must fay he did not know whether he took it right or wrong, but apprehended he took it right. In which case (to omit that this apprehending or thinking the Evidence fo Brong as to determin affent, is the Second kind of Certainty he affigns here before he comes to Absolute Certainty) I ask how he can pos-Gbly think himselt Certain a thing is such, when he fees he does not know whether he be mistaken in it or no? And how a Judgment that a thing absolutely is, and a Judgment that it may not be for any thing he knows, can be confistent together in an Intellectual Nature, without defroving the First Principle of our Understanding, wis. That 'tis not Poffible the fame thing should at once be and not be.

As. I have not done with this new invented Absolute Cortainty of his. It must spring he says from the Highest Evidence which in point of Reason the thing is capable of. Where every expression is Indeterminate and Ambiguous. Suppose (as I urg'd lately) the thing be not capable of any Clear Evidence (as himself supposes there is not for such or such a Doctrin to have been taught by Christ) why must be needs Affent at all? Why does he not Supend? God has endow'd us with a Faculty of doing this, as a bridle to keep us from Precipitation, and to preserve us from running into Errour; & why should we not ase it, but expose our selves to run headlong into Mistakes; both prejudicial to our Nature, whose Perfection

fection is Trust; and pernicious, in its Confequences. to the Conduct of our Lives ? Again, Certainty, taken from the Thing (as he fays this is) fignifies a Determination of the Mind by means of the Object, and is the Occuin Effect of fome kind of Buidence ; and, therefore, Absolute or Perfect Certainty ought to be the Effect of Perfett Evidence: nor is any Evidence a Perfett one. unless it Concludes. Now he does not like Conclusive Evidence, and so he ought to renounce Absolute Certainty Tis as difficult to guess what he means here by those words in point of Reason, True Reason knows no Me thods but thise to Affent if the Thing be Clear, and to Suffend if it be Nor; and, to conclude or argue being the proper Act of Reason straining after Truth, what's not someluded is not Clear, and therefore not to be accepted for an Abfolme Tomb or Affented to as fuch ; The furnit then (to come close to our prefent Question) is that Abfatute Certainer of finch a Doctrine's having been saught by Christ must either & built on True Evidence of the Grounds for it, and then it cannot confift with De sention, and fo is Infallible : Or it is not ; and, then in deed it may fometimes come to Justify a great Propension, of fmall concerd, an unexamining letting it paff for fuch, but it can never Juftify an Absolute Affem. See more of * from p. 64. this Subject, and a perfect Confutation of this wild Affertion in Border Nomplatesha Relion againff Ruillery. After many rambling hyings of his own he falls to fpeak of pursing an Einsten Consider for especially, about Conrainty and Farality. What we have to do with Farality Iknow not; but I believe the heartily wishes an end of This Fatal Controverly suspectring Cortains; for the ising miserable ross about try being driven now to de-clarge whether he with deny look Principles, or refronce his Unprincipled Doctrin. The best way I can invent to vioifie)

to p. 16g. and fr. p. 173. to p. 180. Discourse Fifth. P. 53.

end all Controversies, is this, that, fince Controversits are Diffutants, and are to produce their Arguments; which are good for nothing nor can ever End Controverhed no less they Conclude, those who renounce Conclusive Evidence and instead of it bring Invisible Motives & Qualifications, may be appos'd and turn'd out of the Lifts, as being, even by their own Confession Infignificant Talkers and Endleft Brabblers. His wrangle about Light and Darknofs, Chrift and Belial is spoke to in my Second Catholique Lotter. Let him thew that his Rule, Scripture interpreted by Private Judgments, does not Patronize Herefy as well as Faith, (which he will never do) and we will be content to acquit him from that horrid Blafohe. my of making Light and Darkness very confisent; and Christ the Author of our Holy Faith and Belial the Father of Herefy and Lies, very good Friends; of which wicked Doctrin, tillhe does this, he flands Indicted.

49. Talledg'd that Scripeure being the Common Rute to him and all Hereticks, the particular or diffinguifbing Rule must be their own Private Judgments interpreting Scripture. Does he deny this, or flow my Difcourfe faulty by affiguing any other that particularizes or diffinguiberthem? No, neither. What does he then? Why he fends me to the old Philosophers to learn Logick. And I tell him with many thanks, I know none, except Airfate, a competent Mafter for Me. Next, he makes Senfe to be a Rule of Judging that is an Imellectual Rule: which I deny: For the Rule to any thing is the Immediate Light to judge of any thing, and multitudes of intervening Knowledges are requisit to inform us when the advertisements of our Senses are right; as is evident in the fallaciousness of Sense in a Stick feeming crooked in water, the bigness of things feen at diffance, and innumerable other particulars. But I ought to difting wife between the Rule of Judgment, and the Judgment made atcording

P. 71. P. 73. 74

P. 53.54.

cording to that Rule. And fo I do, if that be all. For the Rule is the Informer, & my Judgmens the thing informed: But yet if my Judgment follow the Information and fill go wrong, my informer was no good Informer. The Evidence of this, and the propention of uncorrupted Nature so believe Pastours, Fathers and Teachers, and those who were wifer than themselves in things they were Ignorant of, did (I told him) make the Generality of those out of the Church follow the Way of Tradition of their own Church: and not regulate themselves in the choice of their Teness by their private Judgment of Diferetion working upon Scripture's Letter; as is evident in whole Nations (as Denmark) meeting in one particular Belief, and whole Sects agreeing in the very Judgment of their respective Leaders; whence the Sense they make of Scripture as themselves understand it, is not their Rule. First, he quotes a Decree of the Church of England, that nothing is to be requir'd of any man to be believ'd as Faith but what's read in Scripture or may be prov'd by it. But this makes against himself, unless he thinks the Generality, that is, the Lighty of that Church esteem themselves more able to judge of the Sense of what's read in Scripture, or to prove all the highest Points of Faith by it, than their Pastours and Church-Governours are: for otherwise Nature will and ought to incline them to believe their Judgment rather than their own in that affair, which is to follow the Way of Tradition. Indeed, I must confess that by the Doctor's Principles every one of his Sober Enquirers ought to prefert his own Judgment of Discretion above the Church'es: but what He fage is one thing, what the Dictates of honest Nature teaches Mankind is another. 'Tis confest, the Layity of each Congregation judges the Sentiments of their Leaders to be agreeable to Scripture; but I affirm withall that not one in ten thousand, when he comes at

age, lays afide Prejudice, and fetts himfelf to confider anew by his scanning the Letter whether his Leaders told him right, or prefumes of the competency of his own knowledge to judge or determin whether They understood Scripture in the right Sense or no. He talks to us indeed of Helps, and how they call in the old Interpreters of the Church, and desie them to use their own Reafon, de. But every man fees that Few or None fland Indifferent 'till they have us'd all these Helps; but wndoubtingly accept that very Faith in which they were educated: And so they continue; 'till the difcourfing or reading those of a contrary Opinion, unsettles them and put them into Doubts. Befides if those Helps he talks of are not secure from erring themselves as to what they help others in, they may help them to Misunderstand the Sense of Scripture in the Highest Points of Faith, and so help them to be Hereticks. And yet these are all the best Helps his Principles can Help them to; For he affures us and maintains floutly by affirming them all to be Fallible in what they are to belo us, that all his Helps may be deceiv'd in that very thing in which they are to belo others: They may indeed according to him, give a frong guef at what is Christ's Doctrin, but that's all; for he allows none to be Absolutely Certain of the sense of Scripture, but only of the Letter. He proceeds after a frange rate and talks of Opinions, doubtfull and Obscure places; but avoids still to come up to those High Points of Faith, particularly those of a Trinity and Christ's Godhead, in which he knows I instanc't. Then he blames my Logick, for not distinguishing between the Rule of Faith and the Help to understand it. And my Logick remembers its respects to his no-Logick, and sends him back word, that fince an Intellectual Rule to fuch a thing is an Immediare Light or Means to know that thing as his Friend

r. 55. 56.

P. 55

Dr. 7. has told him, Rule of Faith, p. 40. and is purposely fram'd to give us that Knowledge, nay Effectially Ordain'd to that End, 'tis a Contradiction to lay it needs another thing to lend it Clearness, in order to give us Christ's Sense; for then this other thing would be clearer than It as to that particular Effect; and, fo, This not the Other would be the true Rule of Faith. Yet he will needs prove this Contradiction True, and that it may be a Rule and yet not have Pomer to regulate without the help of another; And, by what Argument will he prove it? Oh, he can prove things by better means than Arguments. He has an Infance ftill at hand, either when he is prest too close, with anothers Arguments or wants one of his own. These Instances are good Serviceable drudges and are ever ready to do all his Jobbs; and yet I doubt his Instance brought to prove a Contradiction, must it felf be of the same Chimericall Family. Let's see 'tis this P. 55.56. that a Nurse teaches Children to Spelland read the New Testament, & So by degrees to understand Christ's De ctrin; and yet the Faith of those persons is not resolved into this Help, of the Nurses Teaching but into the New Testament it felfas the Ground of their Faith. I must confels I extreamly admire at this Drs Confidence, and na less at his Imprudence that he does not rather not write at all then perpetually put fuch shams as these upon his Reader. Are we speaking of all remote helps whatso ever, or are we locaking and of a Help for the Rule to do its Proper Effect, which is to give us Christ's Sense or our Faith? God and Nature has helpt us with a Rational Being, Eyes, and Brains: Conversation or Masters have helps us with skill in the Language in which the Letter of Scripture is deliver'd, and Tradition has belpe us with the Right Books and Copy of Scripture : Do any of these concern our present enquiry? Are not these all presupposed to his Rule? The only Question is what belp

bely is necessary to give his Rule (the rest being all pre-Suppos'd) the Power to regulate us in knowing the Senfe of that Book or our Faith, as to thole Spiritual and most Important Articles? To do this being the Proper Effect of his Rule, and, a Thing not being what it should be, or is pretended to be, unless it have a power in its self to do its Proper Effect, (fince it's Essence was ordain'd for it) hence I affirm it must need no help to do this, but must have it of it felf; and therefore if scripture's Letters have not of it felf Clearness enough to give those who are coming to Faith the requifite Certainty or knowledge of what's its true Sense in those Dogmaticall Points, 'tis no Rule of Faith. This is the only Point, and therefore must only be omitted: what's this to a Nurse's Teaching to read? Or what's her Teaching to the Immediate and Certain Light to know Christs Senfe in those Main Articles? His Friend Dr. T. goes (by chance) a little more confonantly, and confesses the substance of this discourse of mine, by allowing that the Letter of Scripture must be Sufficiently Plain, even in those High Points I mention (Rule of Faith, p. 86.87.) But it feems, the upon fecond thoughts fearing to be pinch't hard upon that point, they have fince that vime, chang'd their meafures.

him; Dector, this very Rule you bid me follow, so my best stationary this very Rule you bid me follow, so my best stationary to the state me you have ear'd in bolding the true Godhead of Christ; nay, suppose he should say the same to the whole Church of England; what could he or that Church either, say to such a man according to his Principles? They can only propose and direct, and that's the utmost they ought to do; and, if he likes not their Proposal & Direction, they ought to let him alone, nay commend him for sticking so close to his Rule, as he understands in, without searing the sace of Man. For its the greatest injustice

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P. 37.

Loiuffice and Tyranny in the world to punish a man Temporally, or (which is worse) by Ecclesiastical Cenfures for following fincerely this Rule of Faith. Belides. who can tell but this man is better flock't with Dr. Sr's Morall Qualifications and Inward Light than his Judges and Pastours are? And then to vex such a Saint is to fight against God: And therefore the Scabb'd Sheep must be let alone to run aftray or infect the Flock ; let the Church & her Government go where they will. Now, who fees not that these Principles must shatter the Church in pieces, fill her with a multitude of Bedlam Sects, and utterly overthrow Church-Government? But what would J. S. do with fuch a man? Why, first I would endeavour to dispossess him of that Luciferian Spirit of Pride, which such wicked Principles have tainted him with, and win him to a rational Humility by reprefenting how all Mankind in their feveral affairs feek ou one more skill'd than themselves and use their best me fon in pitching upon him, and then trufting him in things themselves are Ignorant in. I would shew how the Order of the World, the Commands of Gal. and his known Duty, do all oblige him to believe the Church in fuch matters rather than his own Private la terpretations; I would endeavour to shew him that the Preservation of these necessary Orders engages God's Providence to affift his Church and keep her from Erring in Faith, rather then private Men. I would flow him that, fince the only thing he doubts of is to know what Christ taught; & that God has left fome Way to make us fure of his true Doctrin, he must first find out fuch a Way that, if men follow'd it, would fecure them from Errour in that particular. Nor would it be hard to demonstrate to him that * Tradition is such a way, and that Scripture's Letter interpretable by private Judgment is not that way. I would shew him how impossible

ibid.

* fee it confest by the Reflecter, p. 21tris the Body of the Church should have unanimously deserted that Way; And, amongst other things I would inform him how meakly Dr St. had desended his Own Rule and impugn'd ours; and, lastly, how he and others who followed another way, have been forc't to grant that all the Main Points of Christian Doctrin may be false for any thing they know. These and such-like Discourses, I hope, would at first startle him, and at length cure him, if he were not too deeply tainted with Enthusiasm, or a high opinion of his own Moral Qualifications and Divine Missances: For, if he were, he is got beyond the reach of Reason and Humane Discourse; and is not to be helpt by any thing under a Miracle, perhaps not by that neither.

51. He feems to deny People the Liberty to interpret Scripture against the Teaching Church. But his discourse founds Hollow when he comes to show he does fo. Some fleight thing he fays about the Senfe of the Teaching Church in the best and parest Ages; but not a word of what they owe to the present Church, which is their Proper and Immediate Infructress and Governess; by which discourse it should seem he holds the Church of England none of the best nor purest. The main point is, whether, if, after having confulted the Primitive Church, and consider'd what Crounds she brought for her Doctrin and Decrees, the Enquirer still likes his own Interpretation better, he is in that case to submit his privare Judgment to the Decrees of That or Any Church; And how the Church is to look upon him in case his private Interpretation leads him into a flat Herefy? These are the true Points, and Tests of Dr. Se's Principles and yet undiscover'd Consequences; but these are slubber'd over, or rather, indeed, never teacht. Yet he complains of me, for being Obsere; when as 'tis acknowledg'd he writes Clearly, but 'tis Clearly from the Point, nor bas any

P. 58.

1. 59.

writer

P. 60.

packing the Cards, &c. He fays too, that 'tis aukward reasoning. to fay nothing but Infallibility will content him now. Pray. which is more ankward? If the Judges acknowledge themselves Fallible. (in which case nothing can be said to be True that is held upon their Testimony) then he allows them very much Authority, but not upon other terms. But he is high in choler against me for faving he has an aversion against the Churches intermeddling in matters of Fath; and imputes it either to great Ignorance or a malicious Design to expose bim to Church Governers. But his comfort is he pities my Ignorance and de-(pifes my Malice. This is Stately and Great, I do affure him my only Defign is to oppose such Principles as leave all to the Fanatick phrenzy of every private Interpreter; and till he fatisfies the World better that his Principles are not guilty of this Enormity, I shall thill oppose him let him buff never so high. The Point is, how does he clear himself? Why, he says he disputes not against Church- Authority in due propoting matters of Faith; Certainly Church-Authority is mightily oblig'd to him. A Genuin and Learned Son of the Church of England, speaking of this very Doctrin of his, tells him, that Propolals of their own nature are fo far from inferring an Authority to Commiand their reception, that they rather imply a Bower in those to whom they are propos'd, at Discretion to Reject them; and so, in the Alue gives the Authority to the Deeple. Which words contain the full sense of my Difcourse here against the Dr and his beloved Sober Enquirer. Why is he then fo high against me for exposing him, when those of the Church of England have already expos'd him more than I have done? This is no great fign either of Ignorance or Malice, when persons who are otherwise of different Judgments and Communions, do center in the same opinion of his Doctrin as destructive of Church-Government. But 'tis yet more pleafant,

* Answer to *
2 Letter 2gainst Mr. L.
p. 23.

pleasant, that he will not promise he will not dispute against Church-Authority even in this due proposing Matters of Faith, but with a Provifo, that every man is to judge P. 60. 1. 29. for his own Salvation. As much as to fay, If the Church will be fo fawcy or fo wicked as not to let my Sober Enquirers alone to interpret Scripture as they lift, or hold what feems to their Wife Worships to be the Sense of it, (which, with him, is judging for their own Salvation) but will be censuring or Excommunicating them for Hereticks, if they hap to err in Christ's Godhead for example, or any other fuch Point, then Church-Authority have at you; for I tell you plainly it you do this I shall and will dispute against you. It would be worth our knowing too what the pretty cautious words [due proposing] means. There seems to lurk some hidden Mystery in that little monafy lable [Due] which may come to help the sober Enquirers with an Evalion from submitting to Church-Authority, or obeying it, in cale it misbehaves it felf unduly, or grows fo malapert'as to restrain them in their licentious Prerogative of interpreting Scriptufe as their Gifted Fancy infpires them: It looks oddly, and feeths to have some ambidextrous meaning in it; but we will hope the best till he comes to unfold it. Now, because Honourable Company is creditable to those who are highly obnoxious, he names St. Chryfostom, St. Mustin, St. Thomas of Aquin, and Bellermin as of his opinion, but with the same sincerity as he pretended all Divines of both Churches. and even my felf to hold all Necessary Points may be found by every sober Enquirer without the Churches Help; as may be feen hereafter 5. 57. 'Tis indeed the General Opinion of the Fathers, that we are not always heard when we pray for Temporal Things, or even Spiritual Goods for others; but that our Request is always granted when we ask Spiritual Goods for our felves. But

then, 'tis ever understood with this restriction, that we must not make our suit to have Knowledge or Virtue by Extraordinary ways, and neglect the Ordinary Methods laid already by God's Providence to attain those good Gifts. Our Question then being of understanding those difficult places of Scripture which contain the main Articles of our Christian Belief, and whether they can better attain to the Sense of Scripture with unerring Certainty by their own Private Judgments, without the Churches Halp, or by the Churches Means, and Dr St's Principles afferting the former Method, mine the Later, I do affirm, that none of those Authors hold with him, but would condemn his Tenet for Herely. He Quotes none of the places except Bellarmin, who foeaks not of persons looking for Faith in Scripture's Letter as to those Points, but of the Faithfull, Praying for Wisdom to live well; and he, as the Dr relates it, denies the Gift of Interpretation (the Dr's way to come to Faith) is to be had by Prayer, which is our main Point, However, our Dr pretends himfelf wonderfully skillfull in our Authors, because he can make a shew of Quoting them; tho, it be quite from the purpose. He should have kept an Eye to the State of the Question, and brought his Citations home to it; but this is not his way. His main art through this whole Treatife is to keep the from the Readers fight, talk in Common, name great Authors for his Youchers, but never thew how they favour him by applying them. And then he's fafe, by virtue of a great noise & fine Raree shows. He ends with railing, at the rate of a man at his Wits End ; I defire him to pacify his spleen, for no man that knows me and my circumstances, does or can think I write to raise my felf, or to be careffed (as he phrases it) by any man. I will never court any man's favour, or fear his frowns, when I am defending Truth.

. P. 61.

P, 62.

53. But the Scene is chang'd, all of a fudden, & I am almost asham'd to reflect as it deserves on what follows in his two next Paragraphs. 'Tis fo purely A-la-Mode of Merry Andrew; Never did Grave Man make fuch a Fop of himself. But his Reason was Nonplust, and his Fancy was over-heated, and this must plead his excuse: for what could be do better in fuch ill circumstances? To fet right what his Raillery has fo ravell'd I declar'd my Tenet was, that every man is to use his fulgment of Diftretion or his Reason in finding out a Rule which could ascertain him of all the several Points taught by Christ: Since the Rule of Faith being antecedent to Faith, must consequently be the Object of pure Reason. That by this Rule he was to judge for his Salvation, and of all Contro. verted Points. For, if this Rule gave him Absolute Affurance that all those determinate Points were indeed taught by Chrift, then fince he acknowledg'd Chrift's Doctrin to be from God, they were to be held by him to be Divine and True; If it give him no fuch affurance of this, being in it felf Fallible, then they are not to be held Divine, nor True, nor Faith, nor the way to Salvation; fince, in that case, they might perhaps be Diabolical, Fulle, Herely, and the may to Damnation. Now no fuch Rule does he affign us, but leaves it to the Fudgment of his fober Enquirers to find out those determinate Points in Scripture's Lettter: which, in those Articles of fo profound a fense is obscure to them. Our Judgment of Discretion is to find out a Certain Light to walk by in those sublime passages, in which the Light of our own Reason is very dim. His is to do as well as he can in penerrating the Sense of the Scripture in fuch high passages, tho' he fees he may fall into Error every step. That is, his way is indeed to be a Rule to our selves, and scorn to be led by the Church, tho' there be all the Reason in the world to think Her wifer than our felves in that affair.

fair. What fays the pleasant Dr to this? Or how does he make good his judgment of Discretion, or overthrow ours? why, First; he laughs heartily over and over, that I come closer to take a view of his Judgment of Difcretion after 99. pages. As if my whole Book had been to treat meerly concerning that one point, and I had never handled it till now: whereas his Conscience knows; (but that necessity has forc't him to bid it Farewell) and every Reader fees that above forty other Points were to be handled as they lay in my way, and that this concerping the Judgment of Discretion, was the very last I was to speak to. What pityfull Trifling is this? Then comes in the Game at Cards, blew apron and Tub over and over; That I yield to his Sober Enquirer what he aim'd at; that I make the Fanaticks Catholiques, and his Sober Enquirer a Judge of Controversies, and would have him judge with out his Rule: Which is a continu'd Series of willfull and ridiculous Forgeries: For I allow him to judge of never a Point of Faith but by his Rule, and affirm that he is to find out his Rule by his Reason or Judgment of Discretton. But this clear Method he casts a Mist over all the way; and, finding that Seriousness would gravell him, he has recourse to his beloved and still-affisting Friend, Droflery. Next, he aske, what if the matter propos'd by this Certain Authority which I have found out by my Reason be very much against Reason? And I ask, whe ther the Matter under Consideration be the Object of Natural Reason, or no? If it be not, then Reason is to concern it felfin judging of the Humane Authority of the Church attefling it to be Christ's Doctrin, which is -Subject to Reafort; and not with the Other, which is confessedly above Reason. He knows I still speak of the High Mysteries and Articles of our Christian Belief which are Supernaturally reveal'd or taught by Christ and his A. poffles ; and will be have the profound Judgment of difcretion

P. 62.

eretion of his Sober Enquirers scan them by their Reafon? This favors too strong of the Socinian. Yet he flicks not to fay the fame, (that is, Natural) Reason belps P. 64. 1. 3 men to Fudge of the Watters propos'd by this Certain Authority. It makes yet worse for his Credit, that, whereas I instance all along in the Teners of the Bleffed Trinity and the Godhead of Chrift, he stills recurrs to Points necessary to Salvation; by counterpoling which he feams to think those Mysteries not necessary to Salvation. But who fet the bounds of Reason? why, God and Nature, by alotting Reason for its Sphere Natural Objects; and by so doing, precluding her from attempting to found the Profound Depth of Supernatural ones by her Shallow Line. He is angry that as foon as this Certain Authority is difcover'd, we then cry, Good night Reason, I have no more use of you. This favours yet more frongly then the former. Would he have us, after this Certain Authority has af-Tur'dus' tis Chrift's Doctrin, still to sufpend our Belief till we have examin'd the Myfteries themselves by our naturall Reason? I am loath to name what this signifies. I omit to infift on his bad Logick, shall I say, or want of Common Sense; who, tho' a Certain Authority were Suppos'd, yet discourses all along as if the things it proposes may still be false, or need the Examination of Reafon whether they be false or no. But this argues he has not once in his thoughts the Notion of True Certainty, but means some Mock-Certainty or Probability by that word; otherwise twas impossible such a Fancy should have a feat in his Mind. For the most obvious and Common Light of Reason tells him that what's Truly Certain (as what's built on a Certain Authority is,) cannot be Falle, nor can need any further Scruting whether it be or no.

54. Next he asks, Are all People Capable of this Certain Reafon? They are, or may be made fo according to their pitch, fo Tradition be rightly represented, and not Perverted

Ibid.

verted as it was by him throughout his Sermon . Fornothing is more futable to the Capacity of every one then is the Force of a vaft Witneffing Authority. And, tho' they were not, yet being in it felf Certain, it preferves even those who are uncapable of seeing the reason for its Cortainty, from erring in Faith while they rely on it, which his Rule does not. He puts Questions and gives Answers. here very kindly for his own behoof; and from fuch fleight Grounds concludes he may have True Faith and be fav'd without finding out this Certain Authority. The later I leave to God's Mercy, which may, I hope, give him the Grace to repent his impugning known Truths, which with him I fear is too frequent: but he makes himself too Liberalla promise of True Faith without it. However he expresses it modestly, and only says he muy have it; that is, he may hap to hold right in Some points of Faith by his private Interpretation of Scripture, with out Tradition of the Church; and he may hap to hold Twenty Herefies. His fifth Head is ridiculous; for 'tis a. pure Folly to talk of believing the Scripture, without knowing certainly what the Scripture fays. Let him fecure this, and none will refuse to yield a perfect and stedfast belief to what Christ has taught us by it. Our know. ing the Senfe of it in pallages containing dogmatical Tenets of Faith is the only Point between us; In affigning fome Certain Means to do this, he is dull and flat, or elfe perfectly Silent; but mighty brick in what's nothing to our purpole. His Sixth is frivolous, and answer'd with a bare denying that we hold that Tradition is only so load us into the Certain Senfe of Sovietune. And this he knew before, as he did five hundred things he pretends here unknown tohim. And this was but fitting. For had he and the down them and the worken brought for them, he had flood engaged to Answer them : But by seeming will not to know them, he puts us to lay our Teners and bring

P. 66.

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our Proofs over and over again; in the mean he reaps the advantage of gaining time, and coming off dextroutly at present. His Seventh is the same with the Second, and spoken to already. His citing Scripture Texts has the fame fault with better half this whole Book ; vie. Something is faid in common never apply'd to the point in hand, or brought dofe to it, but left in that Ram Condition, to make the Reader think there is Something in it, tho' he knows not well what. Our point is, that our Judgment of Discretion is not to be Employ'd about scanning the Mysteries of Faith by our Natural Reason, after we have found a Certain Authority proving them to be Christ's Doctrin, or interpreting fuch Texts of Scripture by our Private Judgments to gain Assurance what is to be held of Faith. The first Text [I peak as to Wife Men, judge ye what I fan may, for any thing he has shown relate to Manners, or to the avoiding Idolatry spaken of the verse before, which is known by the Light of Nature; or to fomething relating to or confequent from a Point of Faith already known, as is intimated in the following verses. Of all these they may judge, but None of these comes near our buliness, as appears by the State of the Question. The Second Text is Prove all Things. And does he think this can mean, they should consult their natural Reason how it lik't the Misteries, or rather (in case. that Text had indeed related to them I does it not fignify that they should consider well of the Grounds why they Embrac't them? The Third is, Try the Spirits whether they are of God. And this is spoken in order to the Antient Hereticks; whose Spirits they were to Try by examining whether they deviated from the Doctrin preacht by the Apostles; or by looking what Grounds or Motives they produc't to prove their new Doctrin to be Christs The Judgment of Diferetion in this Laft case we allow; and the two Former are both of them wide of our bufiness.

P. 67.

45.9

ness, unless the Second were meant of examining things by the Grounds for them. It were good to dive into the Drs thoughts, and get light what it is he would here be at. The Apostles (fays he) allow'd them to make we of their Understandings, tho' themselves, the Proposers were Infallible. What mean these dry Common words? Does he mean they were to Understand what it was the Apostles taught ? This is the Duty of every Hearer, Catholickand Protestant, and the very End of all Teaching and Preaching; and, fo, it does not reach the peculiarity of his Judgment of Diferetion. Does he mean they were to examin whether the Apostles were Divinely-inspir'd or not? This was very laudable in them; for this is to use their Reason e're they allow their Authority, and is the very Judgment of Difcretion we recommend; but he is here impugning our Judgment of Discretion, and so cannot mean thus. He is then contending for a Judgment of Diferetion which shall scan the Verity of the Points of Paith themfelves, or the Matters propos'd even by a Certain Authority, by his Naturall Reason. I am loath to fix a censure upon Common words; but I must tell him that if he means fo, and that, tho' we receive the Tenets of a Trinity and Chrift's Godhead (for example) upon Certain Authority, we are fill to suspend our Affent, till opr Great Judgment of Discretion shall consider well of the Matters proposid, and reject them if fuch uncouth Articles feem difagreable to Natural Reason, (his afeful Serveme not yet discarded:) If this be his Tenet, as it feems to be, then I must tell him his Principles are perfeetly Socinian. Whether he follows those Principles in his particular Teners I am not to judge; but fuch Edge ing and Leaning towards those Principles do, I conceive, oblige him to fatisfy the World he is not that way Affected.

P.65.

wherein it lies, and howfar it extends? I answer the Authority our Question proceeds on is the Humane Authority of the Church deriving down Christ's Faith: Nor do I know any Catholick who ever impugned that, but one unknown Nameles Author Lominus; whom here out of his constant love to sincerity he is pleas'd to call [Others.] But, in case any should differ about it, it being a thing Previous to Faith, and, therefore, Subject to our Natural Reason, all I can say is, the better reason must carry it, He knows well how many most Eminent Catholick Writers have approved and follow'd in their Writings the same way of Controversy I take. But he is not now in fuch good circumftances as candidly to acknowledge any thing. He is put to his shifts; and counterfeit Ignorance does him as much service as any of the rest. But how proves he that when we have found a Certain Authority we must not follow it and rely on it? Plain sense tells us we may and ought. Why, he fays 'tis putting out our Eyes, throwing our felves beadlong from a Precipice, and there's an End of Controversies. Is not this mighty Learned? Another man would think that a Certain Authority were the only way to preferve us from all these Inconveniences, and keep us from erring, especially in matters only Knowable by Authority. But our Dr has a Judgment or Difcretion of another mold than Reason has fram'd for him. In the mean time what Answer gives he to my Reason for the contrary position, and that therelying on a Certain Authority is to keep our Eyes in our Head Bill? In doing this we do not at all relinquift our Resson, but the Letter. follow and exercise it? For, nothing is more Rational than to p. 102. Submit to an Authority which my Reason has told me is Abso, lutely Centain, in things which the fame Reafon affures me can no other ways be known Certainly but by that Authority This feems plain fense, and comprizes the whole Point; and for that very reason he thought it not safe to med-

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(94)

die with it; but, instead of doing to coamske the Res-* Room p. 60. der wish * Seven impertinent Discourses of his own; to p. 69.

and that it is he Answers my Catholick Letters,

56. Hitherto he contented himfelf to impugn me with Falle Suggestions, nimble Avoidances, pretended Ignorance of our known and oft-repeated Tener, and with merry Conceies; but now he thunders our his dreadfull Indignation against me, with Angry Viper, Venemons Froth, spleen, Gall, &c. By which he gives us to understand that the place I prest upon was very ren

* Dr St's Seand fore. At the end of my Difcourse I repeated * his cond Letter avow'd Polition, that Every Sober Engairer may tolthout the p. 21. Claurchen thelp find out all necessary Points of Faith in Scrip

ture. This being a Paradox, fo pestilential in its felf, and fo Pernicious to Church-Government, and to all the

Dearest and most Sacred Concerns of Christianity, I could do no less, out my Zeal for those Best Goods, than

brand it with thefe just Cenfures, viz. *that it was the very First Principle, nay, the Quinteffence of all Herefy; Fa-

naticism in the Egg; perfect Enthusiasm when hatcht, and downright Atheism when stedg'd. This I said, and thus I justify my Charge. To make private men competent Interpreters of Scripture as to all necessary Points of

Christian Faith, without the Churches Help, and yet not to furnish them with any Certain Means of not erring or millaking is Senfe, is the very First Principle of all

Herofo: For, * Non enim nate funt Harefes mis anim Scrip ture bone intelligenmen non bene. No Herefy has any order

fource, but when the Scriptures good in themfelves are under-Rood in as ill Senfe. Next, let this wild licentious Prin-

ciple, that they need not the Churches Help to find out if Meceffany Points in Scripture, lettle in the Meads of the Mobile, tis perfectly confequent that they must judge that whatever the Church holds contrary to what they con-

ceive is the fense of Scripture, is either Falfe or unnece far73

P. 69.

to Mr G.

Third Catho. Letter. p. 104.

Augustin. Tract, 18. in Joan.

fary; and in case the Church judges that what They hold is Grand Herefy, and therefore that the contrary Tenet is a Necessary Point, and therefore Subjects them to Her Cenfures, they must have the Churches Government as the worst of Tyrannies that would oblige them to forgo their Rule, renounce their Faith, and obey Man mether than God. In a word, this Principle naturally leads them to contemn the Church and her Pastours, as neither able to belp them in their Way to Faith, nor to Govern them init; Unless the Dr means by Governing, that the Church-Officers are to fee, that each of them follows their own Fancies, and decline not from fuch Tenets (let them be never so Heretical) as their wife Judgment of Diferetion has thought fit to embrace. which is fanaticifin in the height. Again, the Conceit of this felf-fufficiency codling as I may fay, in the hot Brains of many of those Fanaticks, enfranchized thus bleffedly from the Churches Government, Dr St. still Muring them they cannot mifs of knowing Gods Will . in fuch Points to they but pray for Wildom; and Common Senfe telling them they are no Scholars, nor have this Knowledge by Hamane Means; it follows necessarily that they must think their Prayer is heard, and that they have it by Divine Inspiration. Whence they will imagin the Holy Ghoft buzzes Truths in their Ears like a Bee in a Box, which is perfett Enthulatin. And it will come pat to their purpose, and help forward very well, that Dr St. when he flood engag'd to fbew or produce his Proofs that his Faithfull have Abfolute Certainty of their Faith, that is of the true Senfe of Scripture, confesses plainly no Such Proofs are producible and recurrs to Moral Quelifistions and many other Invisible Requilites to give men allurance of it; which are impossible to be known by Human Reason, being only Knowable by God Himself. Whence, Nature obliging all men to guide themselves by by some Sure Light in things of Infinite Concern, and all Motives that should appear outbardly to Reason, being, according to him, Cloudy and Dark, it directs them necessarily to seek for this fure Light within; and so become Enthullals. In the mean time not to speak of A. theists who are By-standers and confirm'd in their Atheilin by feeing such Bedlam-doings amongst Profesfors of Christianity, imbu'd with no better Principles than what he gives them; the more refin'd & ingenious fort of Mankind, who are too wife to be led in the dark,& strain their best endeavours to search after solid Grounds, by which they may be perfectly affur'd of Christs Faith, or the fenfe of Scripture, in fuch Points; & find that none fuch could be brought by the famous Dr st. but that, when he was most highly engag'd to produce his Proofs for that most important Point, he recurrs still to holes as dark as the private Spirit; What can they do other (were there no better Grounds than his producible) but conclude that there is No Certainty of Christian Faith at all, and that the Greatest Professors and Writers do by their Carriage confessas much; and thence cometo apprehend that Religion is a meer Cheat to keep up the Interest and Ambition of those who look for rich & vings, and affect to have many Followers; which will bring them to a Mepris of Religion it felf, and so dwindle into atheim. This is the Natural Progress of Dr Si Principles. From which ill Consequences he shall never clear himself till he shews us the Light and Method gi ving him and his No Church men Certainty of the Senfe of Scripture; and this fuch an Absolute one as can in True Reason beget and justify a most Firm and Unalterable Affent that the Tenets they hold are indeed Christs True Doffrin; and till he restores to the Church and her Government that necessary Authority of which his ille contrived Principles have robb d her: Let him not think

think to acquit himself by telling us here of his allowing the Church a Power of Proposing and directing in Faith. A Learned Son of the Church of England has * told him * Answer to APrivate Perfor may do the Former; and that the La- gainft Mr. L. ser is fuch a Liberall Grant as was given to the Statues of Mer- p. 23, 24: cury, which of old were fet up to direct paffengers in their Way, and leaves Men much at like Liberty to regard either. More is justly and prudently requir'd, viz. A Power to make ber Declarations Law; and this as to Matters of Faith. & not only in things belonging to Order and Decency ; 0. therwise the Later without the Former, makes (as he argues very well) some kind of Fence about the Church against Schifmaticks, but lays her open to all manner of Hereticks.

17. This just Censure of mine, upon the Drs. Principles, was fuch a Chask Pear to him, that 'tis no wonder he keck's at it so vehemently. The Great Credit he had got whether for defending Christian Fairly, or no, the Reader is to judge) made him form to bring it up again and regrect it: But he uses all the Arts imaginable to Paliste and Exceseit, and those such wretched ones that is a shame to mention them; and, certainly, never was fo Hesery a Charge fo Miferably refuted. He fays confidencly this Doctrine of his wown'd by all Men of Underfunding in both Churches. Whereas, if he can flow me aay one Catholiek who maintains that he can have any Faith at all or ground fuch a Firm & facred Affent upon his own private Interpretation of Scripture without the Churches Help in those most sublime and necessary Articles which have been dubious and conteffed between the Church and any Hererick, (of which only we fpeak) he will do more than Miracle. But I am mightily mitaken; he will name one, and who should that be but F.s. himfelf: What a boldness is this, to make me his Patron to defend him in that very Polition which I am in this very place Impugning Well but what fays F. s. Why,

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He lays that every man is to judge for his own Salvation, and of the best way to his Salvation, and of all the Controversies between them and in, and especially of the true Grounds of Faith, and all this without the Churches Help. Now 4.8. fays indeed ther a man coming to Faith does by his Res fon find out the True Rule and True Church; that thus he Andges for bis own Salvation, by using his Reason to find out a Rule Ground or Way to right Faith which is to bring him to Salvation; that, by his Rule thus found out, he Judges of all our Controversies, in judging that to be Christ's true Doctrin which that Rule recommends as fuch: but is this to judge of Points of Faith without the Churches Help, when that very Rule by which he judges of them is avow'd by him to be the Charden Testimony? Above all, does he not all along declare hi abhorrence of finding out Faith in Scripture's Letter private Judgments, which is the Drs Polition ? A must 7. 8. still be of the Drs Sentiment, tho' he in occasions contradicts it, disputes against it, and be it? What will not this nonpluft man fay, when he put to bis Shifts! Any Common words, tho' when ply'd to particulars they be directly contrary to b must be prefum'd to be for bine; in despite of a long confrant Tenous of all circumstances, and whole courses to the contrary : whoever peruses my Third a sholick Letter from p. 99, to the End, will see that my we of Fadging for our Salvation is as opposite to his as of Pole is to another, and he has the incredible Confid to make them the Same. At length he hopes to come by alledging that he spoke it only by way of Suppositi that If one may without the Churches Help find out Charche's Authority in Scripture, then why not all no Point of Faith & And, was this Afte faid ? Inde cond Letter craftily insender's his Pofition Conditionally ; but die not, after the words [* Then overy fuck Person [wint

P. 71.

to Mr. G. P. 21.

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Tober Enquirer) may without the Churche's Help find out all neceffary Points of Faith] Esponse the Polition it felf, which had been thus introduc't; and this most Peremptorily; by immediately subjoying these words [which is a Dottrin I am fo far from being afbam'd of, that I shink it most agreea-Me to the Goodness of God, the Nature of the Christian Faith, and the Unanimous Confent of the Christian Church for many Aus.] And will be now tell us after all this Politive afferting it, that it only proceeds upon a Supposition, a why not, & a Parity of Reason. He objects I answer it not. Why! was iran Argument? or must I standanswering every voluntary faying of his (which are infinit,) every Supposition, and every why not? If I must needs speak to it, the Impathy of Reafon confists in this, that the Church being conftisured by God to infrust the Faithfull in their Faith, it was but fitting Scripture should be Clearer in those Texts that concern the Churches Governing them in Faith and their Obligation to hear her, than in the particular Points, which they were to be affur'd of by her Teaching. Befides, the Former Point viz. the following the Churche's Instructions and being govern'd by her in their Faith, is a kind of Morall Point, whereas the other Points were, many of them, Sublime Myferies; and therefore, nor so easily Intelligible without a Master. And St. Aufin had beforehand confuted his pretended Parity of Reafon, by telling him, that * Profinde, quamble * Aug. lib. E. binus rei, Os. Wherefore, tho no Example of this thing were contra Cres. produc's out of the Canonical Scriptures, Jet the Truth of the fame Scriptures is held by us even in this Matter, when we do what ferms good to the Univerfall Church, which the Authority of the fame Scripsure Commonds. And because the Holy Scrip-Officerity of this Question, ter bin confule the fame Church conerning it, which Church) the Holy Scripture Demonstrates four any unbiguity. Where he clearly intimates the infallibility

(190)

fallibility of the Church; that it is to be confulted in die bioms Points (and all Constroverted Points, of which we speak, have been call'd into Doubt) which makes its Help very Perofull; and, (which I chiefly insist on) that its Authority is Clearly and without any Ambiguity demonstrated in Scripture; whereas yet in his Second Book de Doc Etrina Christiana, he acknowledges the Obscurity of Scripture in divers places, Obscure quadam dista densistinam caliginem obducunt. Some things, spoken obscures, involve us in thickest Darkness; And if any be Obscure then surely those necessary and High Mysteries of our Faith, which are of such a Deep Sense, must be such, when they come to be scann'd by Eyes as yet unenlighten'd with Faith; as the same Father cited in my Fourth Catholick Letter has also told him.

P. 31. 33.

P. 73. 74.

58. After this be fums up his Performances, and tells us in fort how he has err'd at large. Next he gives us a lame excuse for his Indirect Answer to the Fourth Question propos'd at the Conference, and in effect only commits over again the fame Faults he was charg'd with a little more formally, as his fashion is, and then calls it an eafy Answer; and if it be an answer at all, I must confels tis an eaff one; for any man may with eafe answer a thousand Objections in a trice at that rate: nothing is easier than to omit all that is objected. But I dare undertake that whoever reads my Third Catholick Lester. p. 27. 38.39.40. where four feveral prevarications were charg'd upon him in giving one lingle Answer to Mr. G's Question, will judge it so far from east that 'tis Impossible for him to answer even with any degree of plausibility. But with this fleightness he flips over most of my Objections in my Letters, and supplies the defect with confident Talk, or a Scornful Felt. But, because his main shuffless his altering thole words of the Question, LAR the Divine Revelations of Christ and his Apostles Janto [All

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ters necessary to Salvation] and this is his constant evalion, we will examin it more particularly in order to the fole End of the Conference to which all the particular Questions were to be directed, viz. bis sowing Grounds of Asbolute Certainty for his Faith. 1. Iask, with the good leave of his Jeft, Does he think Christ and his Apoltles taught any unnecessary Points? If not; why did he use fuch cautious diminishing expressions, and instead of All their Doctrin, put, All matters necessary to our Salvation? 2. Christians are wrought up to the Love of Heaven, the Immediate Disposition to it, by Motives, and Some may need more than Others; nay the variety of Peoples Tempers and Circumstances is so Infinite that scarce two perfons will precifely need the same. He is to acquaint us then bom he knows, or how he can make out, that every man shall, by reading the Scripture, be fure to find his own Quota of Motives adjusted and serving for his particular Exigencies? 3. Is he Sure they cannot err as to what's necessary to their Salvation? If, provided they dotheir best, they cannot, then every man is so far Infallibles which the Doctor has deny'd hitherto to all Manking but to himself. If they can eer in matters necesfary to Salvation, then doubtless many willers, and how carrerrour Save them? 4. Tho'all cannot err in all Moral Points, yet can he shew us any thing securing them. from Erringinall those Articles of Faith held by the Church, and renounc't by her Heretical Diffenters ever fince Christ's time? If he cannot, (and he declines shewing us they can, nay he by his Dofrin confesses they may) then they may be Sav'a tho holding all the Herefies that ever were; in which case I doubt he will scarce find them competent Affurance of their Salvation. Again, how knows he but the mixture of many of those gross. Errours may not as much deprave their Souls as their understanding plainer places will edify them; especially if the Church interposes, and Excommunicates them for Hereticks? * Rule of Faith. p. 86.

Hereticks? For his Grounds forbid them to meddle with those high Points, but leave the whole scripture to their fcanning, and his approved Friend Dr. T. fays they are * Plain, and fo are subject to their profound Judgment of Discretion, s. He must tell us how must Church-Disciplin be exerciz'd upon such a Miscellany of Heterogeneous Members of which many obstinately deny, what others pertinacionfly affirm? 6. Is the holding the Godhead of Chrift, and that God dy'd to fave and redeem Mankind, a Matter Necessary to Salvation? Or is it enough to hold it was only a Men to whom they owe that highest Obligation to Love him? Let him speak to this at least; For I am not to expect but his aiery wordifb Divinity makes him look upon the Mystery of the most Bleffed Trinity as on a kind of dry Speculation. Tho, were it seasonable to dilate on that Article, I could shew him that, besides it's exceeding Usefulness to the sublime Contemplatives, the most Sacred and most Influential Points of Christian Faith, and the main Body of Chriftian Language, and the Truth of it, depend on it's Verity. Laftly, Who toldhim that all forts of People who are yet Unbelievers and looking after Chriff's true Doctrin, shall by reading Scripture come to all-faving Faith? Has he it by Divine Revelation, or by Reason? Or, will he recurr to Divine Affilances to keep Particular Persons from Errour, and yet deny them to the Charch? Iffo, how proves he This at least? I wish he would speak out fairly and candidly to these Points, and make something cohere: For I profess with all fincerity I cannot for my heart make any Ides or Sense of this Motly Church which his Principles would parch up. The feveral Members of it hang more loofely together than if they were ty'd to one another with Points : Nay, they were worfe than Fire and Water, and all the feveral Contraction in in Nuture: for they are diffanced by direct Communication

on of one to the other. Whence they are utterly incapable of any kind of Coalition; there being no imaginable means left to refratt the irreconcileably-opposit Qualities of his Affirmative and Negative Faithfull, or reduce fo many Independent private-spirited Members into one Compound. He is to thew us then how the parts of this Rope of Sand (as it may more fitly be called) must hang together. I much fear it will be Invisibly, by vertue of their being of the Elett, and at the fame rate as the Terms coher'd in the Invisible Proofs he alledg'd to Ben us he and his Followers had Chrift strue Doctring

P. 75.

59. We shall never have done with this Parfe of his. He is fo fond of the pretty Similitude that he puts it here over again at large, and spends incomparably more time and pains in defending it, than he does in making outthe Absolute Certainty of his Faith: tho' he both food engaged to do it, and any good Christian too would think it were far more worth his while. Had he done this, the rest might have been more fairly compounded, and his Purle have remain'd unranfack's. However. he thinks it futes well with the Conceit he had of Scripture, but I am fure it futes not at all with our purpole,... his bewing the Abfalute Certainty of his Faith, Hence I * told him that Scripture's commaining Faith was imperti- * Third ment to the whole drift of the Conference ; That the on- Cath Letter ly business was how to get the Gold and Silver of Faith to p. 41. out thence with Absolute Certainty; and how to secure those that aim'd to enrich themselves by it, that instead of extracting the Pure Gold of Tomb by understanding right those high and most Inestimable Articles, the men fackers of it did not draw out thence the Impure Droft of Brrowr and Herefy. Lastly, that he ought to have put two Purfes. One, the Heads and Hearts of the Faithfull, into which the Apostles put this Hear wonly Treasure of Faith by their Proceeding; the Other

Other, the Book of Scripture into which they put it by Writing ; and that Faith was properly in the Former only, in regard Truth is no where Formally but in the Minds of Intellectuall Beings; whereas it was only in Words Written as in a Sign; that is, no more properly than Wine was in a Bush; and that therefore the former had incomparably Better Title to be the Purfe lif go Metaphonelle would ferve his turn but fuch an odd one) at least it ought not to have been quite set aside. But the Dr. without troubling himfelf much to mind what any body favs but himself (by which Method of Answering he has left, above forty paris for one, of my feveral Discourses unanswer'd) will needs have Scripture to be the only Purfe, & Containing Faith shall be enough for His purpose, Ay, that it shall, tho' it be to No purpole. And, so, he tells us, that If all she Doctrin of Christ be there, we must be Certain we have all, if we have the Scripture that contains all. And I tell him what common Sense tells all Mankind, that a man may have all Ariffotles works which contain all his Dodrin, and yet not know or have one Tittle of his Doctrin : Nor. by confequence, has the Dr. one jot of Christ's Doctrin by having meerly the Book that contains it. Shall we never have done with this ridiculous and palpable Nonfense? How often has it been prov'd against him in my Catholick Letters that the Having a Book which contains All Faith as in a Sign (for words are no more) argues not his baving any Faith at all unless he knows the Signification of that Sign? Let's examin then the meaning of the word bave. A Trunk has the Book of Scripture when that Book is laid up in it and that Book contains all Faith; and for that Trunk may by his Logick have all Faith. Dr. St but the same Book, and by baving it, bus according to him, all Fairb too. Iask, Har he all Faith by baving the Book, any other way then the fenfeles Trunk buit. If he Ha then he basit in his Intellectual! Faculty

1 P. 76.

Chris Lemer from p. 41.

as a Knowing Creature should have it; and, if so, he knows it, that is, he knows the Sense of it as to determinate Points in it, for All Christ's Faith consists of those determinate Points: But he still waves his having Knowledge of determinate Points, and talks ftill of Faith only as conrain'd in Scripture in the lump; and, 'tis in the lump in the Book too lying in the Trunk; whence, abstracting from his Knowledge of the particulars of Faith, the wooden Trunk has all Faith as much as He. He'l fav. he believes implicitly all that's contain'd in Scripture whether he knows the Particular Points, or no: But is not this to profess he believes he knows not what? Or is Implicit Belief of all in the Book, Saving Faith; when tis the vertue of the Particular Points apply'd to the Soul's Knowing Power, and thence affecting and moving her, which is the Means of Salvation? He tells us, indeed, (for he must still cast in some good words) that he pretends not tis enough for Persons to say their Faith is in such a Book, but -- Now did I verily think that the Adversative Particular [But] would have been follow'd with [they must be sure 'tis init. But this would have made too good Sense and have been too much to the Point. His [but] only brings in a few of his Customary lukewarm Words which are to no purpose, viz. that they ought to read, and fearch and actually believe whatever they find in that Book. He means, whatever they fancy they have found in it; for he gives neither his Reader nor them any Security, but that after their Reading and Searching, they may still believe wrong. He skips over that Consideration as not worthy, or elfe as too hard, to be made out, and runs to talk of things Necessary and not Necessary. I wish he would once in his life speak out and tell us how many Points are Necessary for the Generality of the Faithfull, and whether God's dying for their Sins be one; and then fatisfy the World that the Socinians, who deny that Point,

P. 76.

do not read, fearth and actually believe what their Judgment of Dilcretion tells them is the Sense of Scripture; and yet, notwithstanding all this, do attually believe a most damnable Herely. But still he fays if a man reads and considers Scripture as he ought, and pray for Wisdom, he shall not mis of knowing all things necessary for his Salvation. So that unless we know that he and his Party do pray for Wisdom and not pray amis, and consider Scripture as they ought, none can be Certain by his-own Grounds that He and his good Folks have any Faith at all, or that their Rule directs them right. He would make a rare Converter of Unbelievers to Chris's Doctrin; who, instead of bringing any Argument to prove that what his Church believes is truly fuch, tells them very fadly and foberly, He has right Knowledge of it and is fure of it, because he has confider'd Scripeure as be ought and bege'd Wifdom of God. But if this fincere Seeker hap to reflect, that thefe pretences are things he can never come to know, and that Sociaians and all other Sects equally profess to consider Scripture as they ought and to pray for Wifdom too, and yet all contradict one another; he muft, ifhe bave Wit in him, and light upon no better Controvertifts, think Christians a company of Fops; who can shew him no asfured Ground of Faith, but fuch a blind one as 'tis impossible for him to fee; and would have him believe that That is a Certain Means for him to arrive at Christ's Faith, which every fide, as far as he can difcern, do equally make use of, and yet are in perpetual variance and Contention with one another about it : So that our Doctor got deep into his old Fenaticifur again; and, which is yet Tomething worse, would have pure Nonsense pass for a Principle to secure men of the Truth of the Points of Faith we believe, and be taken for a good Argument in Controwerft. Certainly, never was weaker Writer, or elfe a Weaker Caule 60. I

60. I am glad he confesses that a Rule of Faish must be Plain and Eafy, and that, otherwise, it could not be a Rule of Faith for all Persons. Let him then apply this to the Dogmatical Points which are only in Question, and bew it thus Ealy to all Persons in those Texts that con. tain those Articles, and his Work is at an End. But alas! that Work, tho' 'ris his only Task, is not yet begun; nor, for any thing appears, ever Will. For tis a desperate Undertaking to go about to confute daily experience. What new Stratagem must be invented then to avoid it? Why he must slip the true Point again and alter it to an Enquiry, Whether the Scriptures were left only to the Church to interpret it to the People in all Points, or whether it were intended for the General Good of the Church, fo m to direct themfelves in their Way to Heaven, and consequently, whether it may not be open'd and underflood by all Persons in Matters that are necessary for their Salvation, What a rambling, what a clutter of Questions is here, when he knows, and it has been repeated near a hundred a times over, that our only Question is, whether the Letter of Scripture be intelligible by all forts coming to Faith in those Revealed Articles which are properly Christian with such a Certainty as is fit to build Faith upon. But this is one main part of his Confuting Talent, to throw in twenty Questions so none of them be the right one. However, tho' he'll not keep the Way, he'll triumph unless we follow him out of the Way. To his Questions then I answer 1. That none but Madmen ever thought or faid that the Church was to interpret it as obscure to the People in All Points. For, ordinary Moral passages, such as the Ten Commandments are plain enough of themselves. Why did he not Instance in the Trinity, the Godhead of Christ and fuch like, which and only which we fay are Observe? Because, that had been to speak to our purpose, and he thought it fafer for him to fuggest orber matters which

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Were

were not all to purpose. 2. They were intended for the General Good of the Church, to direct them in their Lives, and, fo in their Way to Heaven; and to that end are freely read by all that can understand Latin, and might likely have continued permitted to all even of the most vulgar capacities, had not men of his Principles made them think themselves, when they had got a Bible in their hands, wifer than the whole Church. Whence they came to wrest them to their own Destruction. and, therefore, it being now not for the General Good of fuch proud Fools, the Church took care they should not be promiscuously allow'd to all, tho' indulg'd to many, even in the Vulgar Tongue, and explain'd and preach't to All by their Pastours. Lastly, None knows distinctly what he means by Matters necessary to Salvation; He should mean such as those sublime Points so often repeated; but then he must make out such passages can be under flood by all Persons looking after Faith with unerring Certainty to fecure their Faith from being fo many Fallboods or Herefies; But he was not able to do this, tho' he pretended the Rule for all persons must be plain and Eafy. As far as I can guess by a man's words whose whole Discourse is made up of Reserves, he mistakes the Rule of Manners for the Rule of Faith; and thus meant 'tis indeed plain and Easy, but as'tis such 'tis nothing to the Question in debate, which is of Christian Faith, & fo'tis nothing to our purpole. I, but Bellarmin fays, Scripture is a Rule, and that a Certain and Infallible one. But when it comes to the proof he speaks only of the Old Testament, and this as to the Law, Testimonies, or Commandmems, which are easily intelligible as being either Levitical Ordinances, or Moral Precepts. I, but Christ proves his Doctrin by the Scripture, and confutes the Sadduces from them. Well, give us such an Interpreter of Scripture as Christ was, and we shall not doubt but they will prove bis

P. 78.

his Doctrin, and confute all the Hereticks in the World. His referring the Pharisees to Scripture was ad hominem; for they allow'd the Scriptures yet would not believe his Miracles; Tho fure Dr st. will not fay but Christs Miracles were in their own Nature more convincing Arguments than Interpretations of Scripture made or allow'd by the Pharifees. But what's all this to our purposes. I gave three senses of the word [Rule] in my Third Catholick Letter, and shew'd him in which of those P. 82. 83. Senses it was and could only be call'd a Rule in our circumstances. But I might as well have spoke to a deaf. man: He must either counterfeit he never heard of it, or he faw he must be baffled. Common Words are his constant refuge, and to speak distinctly exposes him to be Nonpluft. His Friend * Dr Tillotfon maintains that a Rule * Rule of of Faith is the next and immediate Means whereby the Know- Faith. p. 40. ledge of Christ's Doctrin is convey'd to m. Does he pretend that Learned Cardinal holds Scriptures Letter to be fuch a Rule for all People coming to Christian Faith to know certainly its sense in these High Mysteries, without the Churches Interpretation? The Dr knows he abhorrs the Tenet as the fource of all Herefy. Yet he quotes him on to fay that Nihil est notius, Nihil est Certius, nothing is more known, nothing more Certain than the Scripture; and immediately applies it against me for faying that the * Sense of it as to the Understanding the Mysteries of our * Third Faith was not easy to be got out of the Letter. But Cath. Letter where's his sincerity? Not a syllable has Bellatmin of P. 43-44. 45. Scriptures being fo known as to its Senfe, nor any thing that looks that way. * He speaks only of the Canon verbo Deior Books being most known by the Confent of all Nations Lib. 1.2. who for so many Ages acknowledg'd its highest Authority; and that it is most Certain and True (in its felf) as not containing Humane Inventions but Divine Oracles. So that our Learned Dr is exceedingly brisk when he

gets the Sound of any word on his fide, no matter when ther the fense be for him or against him. If he can but

gull his Reader dextroully his work is done. For a Transition to treat of a Rale, he tells the Reader that I have frent Twenty Years hard Labour about it. I have indeed Employ'd some years and much pains in writing severall Treatises to sente Christian Faith (as to our knowledge of it) on a Sure Basis, which he and his Co-Partners are fill Undermining; and I glory in the Performance. In return, I will not tell the Dr that Mr Lowth fays he fpent a longer time (that is * full Five and Twen-Letter. p. 17. 17 years) in a worse Employment. I shall only say that I have through God's Bleffing, in less then two Months time, writ a little Treatife against his Principles called Errour Nonpluf, which he bas been fifteen years in aniwering; and all his Quirks will never enable him to

give it even a plausible Reply in fitteen more.

* Answer to Mr Lowth's

> 61. And now we are come to fcan the Nature of a Rule: Which being a Point to be manag'd meerly by Reason, the Reader must expect that one of us must necessarily speak perfett Nonfense. For however both fides may talk prettily & plaufibly when the business is handled in a Wordish way of Glossing Citations, & such knacks of Superficial knowledge where the waxen ambiguous expressions may be made pliable to the Writers Fancy; yet the Natures of Things will not brook they should be Injur'd, but will Revenge themselves upon him that wrongs them by exposing him to the shame of speaking perfect Contradictions. I * alledg'd that the word [Rule] Beaks Reditude, and that fuch an Evident one as preferves those who regulate themselves by it from Oliquity or Deviation; that is, in our case, from Error. After the Dr. had play'd the Droll a while upon particular words taken afunder from their fellows, as is his usuall manner, he grants, There wants but one word to make it past Dispute, viz. who effectnally regu-

Third Cath. Letter p. 81.

r. 79.

late themselves by it. Now the word Regulate has clearly an Active Signification; whence, it being impossible an Action should be without an Effect, it follows that Efficiency or Effettuallne fis involv'd in it's Notion: So that, to do a thing Effectually does not fignify any better degree of doing a Thing, but only to do it really and indeed. He pretends [Regulating] is an Ambiguous word, and therefore he affigns it a double Signification. One of them is, what a Man doth in Conformity to his Rule : And Common fenfe tells us that as far as a man acts Unconformably to his Rule, he is not Regulated by that Rule, whence, to act comformably to a Rule is the felf same as to be Regulated by the Rule to which he is to conform. This then is one Signification of Regulating; and tisa right one; for to regulate one's felf by a Rule is nothing elfe but to Act conformably to it. Lets fee the other fense of the word Regulating. 'Tis. this. To * Profest * Declare and * Own to conform to a * P 79.1.35. Rule, but not conform to it, that is, not follow that Rule or p. 80 1.20. Regulate themselves by it. Now, only to Profes, declare, * P. 80.1.22. and own to conform to a Rule and not conform, is not to-follow it or Regulate themselves by it. So that our Learned Dr. has given as here Two forts of Regulating; One, which is Regulating, the other which is not Regulating. Let us put an Instance. The Rule of Justice is to pay every man his own: Now comes an unconscionable Debtor, and maintains he has followed that Rule or Regulated himfelf by it in some Sense; because he has profe f'd, declar'd and own'd he has follow'd that Rule, tho' he has not Effectually and Indeed done fo. Is not this a special way of Regulating himself by the Rule of Justice, and a most Cheap way for a Man to pay debts without disburling a farthing? Yet he may justify himself by Dr. sr's Distinction, and maintain that he has paid them Professingly, owningly, and declaringly, tho' not Effectually. Yet the Dr. is mighty fond of this choice Distinction, and fays All Mr 8's Subtlety vanisbes

P. 80. 1. 28. nishes into nothing by plain and so easy a Distinction. Notwithstanding, as Nonfensicall as it is, he will bring two Infrances to make it good, viz. That there is one fort of Regulating which is Not-Regulating. The one is of a Ciceronian, who Exclared he orders his Speech by his Manner, and yet for want of Sufficient skill and Care may use Phrases which are not Cicero's. Now, 'tis plain that to Regulate himself by Cicero is to we his Phrases; and can he then regulate himfelf by Cicero when he does not ufe his Phrafes? Can he be truly faid to Regulate himself by him, when he does not use his manner of speaking, meerly because he Professes and Declares he does it? Or can he be faid to regulate himfelf by a Rule in that very thing in which he Deferts that Rule and regulates himself by some other Author or his own Fancy? Did ever Common Sense go so to wrack! If he fays he intended to follow Cicero but mistook, I understand him; but intending to do a thing is not doing it; intending to get Riches is not to get Riches, otherwife none need be poor. His Second Instance is, that Some may Protets that Chrift's Commands are their Rule, and yet through their own Fault may deviate from them or Sin. But can Sinners with any sense be said to regulate themselves by Christ's Commands, when they Sin meerly because they profess to follow his Rule of Life? Or can any man of a fettled Brain (Dr St. ffill excepted) pretend a Sinner can be faid to be regulated by that Holy Rule, and deviate from it, or Defert it at the same time? So that his Inflances as well as his Distinctions are pure Folly and Contradiction. These Performances, we must think, qualify him to laugh at my Admirable Logick for not allowing his palpable Nonfence; whereas himfelf is still caught stumbling in the plainest paths of that Common Road to True Learning. I could wish some of Dr Se's Friends would advise him soberly to fall to Quoting and Gleaning Notes, & then stitching them handsomly and Methodically

Thid.

thodically together; where he is in his own Element; for in that Wilderness of words he may take his full vagary, and scribble to the World's End, without much danger of meeting with Conclusive Evidence, which he fo dreads and hates ; but certainly his Talent lies not in this crabbed way of close Reason. The rest of his Difcourse here is imposing upon me that I make men incapable of deferting the Rules of Christian Faith and Virtue: tho' he knows in his Conscience I have told him the express contrary above twenty times. All I pretend to in my Discourse from the Nature of a Rule, is, that It follow b, it will secure the Followers of it from Errour: But I no where ever faid but All Free Agents, or all Mankind may defert those Rules, and, by deferring them, fall into Errour and Sin too, unless supported by God's Grace. He asks if it be possible for men to misunderstand a Certain Rule; and I tell him, it is, in case it be not Clear as well as Certain: And * I have already shewn him that the Cath. Letter Living Voice and Practife of the Church (our Rule) has p. 6.7. 8. fo many ways of delivering clearly her own Senfe, (or Christ's Doctrin) that the Generality cannot fail of understanding it right; however divers Souls to whom this Rule is not fo well apply'd, remaining less cultivated by their own Carelefness or the Negligence of Pastours, may hap to misunderstand some Points. Nor can they run into Errour to as to fix in it, while they think to follow the Rule: For, knowing they are to receive their Faith from the Church, they take not upon themselves to judge of Faith, as his Sober Enquirers do, whom he allows to judge of Scriptures Sense without any Certain Teacher to preserve them from Errour and Herefy; whence such men became fixt and unretractable, by fancying they have Gods Word on their fide; while the others continue docil and capable of the Churches Instruction upon any occasion: And, when it comes to be discover'd (as

in likelihood it will be) by their expressions that they have any Misconceit concerning Faith, it obliges them to seek to be better inform'd by the Church, their Mistrels, whom they are willing to hear and believe; and the Church too becomes oblig'd to rectify their Mistrels.

stakes, and instruct their Ignorance.

62. I have spoken formerly of his Necessary Points. Only Iam to observe here that he avoids very carefully with If's, the telling us whether any of the highest Mysteries of our Faith be necessary for Salvation. But must we still be put off with that frigid Evasion that such fublime Points are as intelligible now at this distance from the time of the Apostles, tho' only couch't in a few words in a Book, as they were when spoke by those Li+ ving Teachers; who doubtless not only deliver'd their Sense in a few set words, but (such Points needing it) explain'd it and dilated upon it, to fettle it better, and fish an express conceit of it deeper into the minds of their Auditors? Can it be imagin'd but that many of the People; and the Pastours especially, put their doubts, and asks them Questions, concerning the Points of Faith they had Preacht, and reveiv'd perment Answers; none of which a Book could do. How ridiculous a pretence then is this! Yet this is his best shift: For, unless the Book have This or an Equivalent Virtue to make Clear its Sense, it cannot have the Plainness or Clearness requifit to a Rule of Faith. He contends that, if those Points be necessary to Salvation, they must be so. Plain that we may be Certain of our Duty to believe them. Which retorts his Discourse upon himself; for if those two sublime Articles there spoken of be Neaeffery for the Salvation of the Generality (which cannot be deny'd without accuting the Primitive Church of Treaser for casting those out of the Church who deny'd them) then they must be Certain, one way or other, that 'tis their Dury to believe

P. 82.

lieve them; and, fince he does not think fit to fay this Duty can be Certainly shewn them by the Letter of Scripture, it follows that this Duty to believe them, must be made Certain by the Testimony of the Church delivering them. 'Tis easy to be feen the whole force of his Difcourse here is built on his begging the Question, that Scriptures Letter as understood by Private Judgments, is the Rule of Faith; and that it is plain in all Necessary Points: Which he ought not to do without shewing us first which Points are Necessary, at least those of the Trinity, and Godhead of Chrift, if he think them fo, and then proving his Rule is Plain in all fuch Points; and not still to suppose, presume upon, and occurr to that which is yet under Difpute, Ungranted, and Usprov'd. Let me then mind him of one piece of Logick, which tho' it be not Admirable, yet 'ris Solid and never regarded by him. Tis this, that no Argument has any force upon another, but either by its being fo Evident that he must forfeit his Reason to deny it, or Granted by his Adversary: fo that he must either Argue from something Clear of it felf or made Clear by Proof, or elfe argue Ex concessis from the Parry's own Concession. By which Rule if all the Reasons he brings here were examin'd, it will manifestly appear he has not spoken one word of True Reason against me in his whole Answer. I do here Challenge him to shew me so much as any One Argument of his that has either of these Qualifications: and to encourage him to fuch a performance, if he can shew me any One fuch, I promise him to pass all the rest for valid and good. I end with defiring the confidering Reader to reflect on the Drs Discourse here p, 82. and upon an exact review of it to determine whether Principles are not deeply laid here to make the Socinians and many other known Hereticks, Members of his Church, and to free them from Church Cenfurers. For if they find not

not in Scripture that the Apostles Preacht the Trinky and Godhead of Christ in clear and Express terms, and with this Connotate, [as necessary to Salvation] they cannot be Certain of their Duty to believe them, the Consequences of which I need not dilate on. His own Church is more concern'd to look to his Tenets than I am.

P. 83.

63. He triumphs much that I grant Some may be favid without the Knowledge of all Christ Tangbe ; He means, those Spiritual Points so often mention'd. But, if be knew how little advantage he gains by it, he would not think it worth his taking notice of. What may be done in an abstracted case is one thing; what, if they live in a Church, and hold Herefies contrary to Christ's and the: Church's Doctrin, is Another. Some Catholick Divines treating of Faith do mantain that to hold There is a God, and that He is a Remarder and Punisher, is Simply enough for Salvation if they live up to those Tenets; whence they conceive hopes that Nebuchadnezzar was fav'd tho' he was no Jew. But what's this to our case? Christ has left us a Body of Doctrin; and finee he did nothing Unnecessary for the Salvation of Manhind, this being the End of his Coming and Preaching, each Point conduced to that End either immediately or by Confequence, whence by the way tis a Folly to expect the Apolles Taught fuch Points as necessary to Salvation, others as not neceffary, fince no Point was Unneceffary for the Salvation of Mankind; except when they faid for Distinction, Dico ego, non Chriffus, or us'd some Equivalent expression. But to return, God has also settled a Church to conferve that Doctrin of Christ Intire. Whence, if any falls into Herefies contrary to that Doctrin by Milunderstanding Scripture's Letter in such passages, 'is her Duty to east them out of the Church and deliver them over to Satan, for their contumacious Pride in preferring their own Private Judgments before the Judgment of their Paffours.

Paffours, and the Church whom God appointed to Teach Them. Whence, I do affure him I do not hold that any one such Privative Unbeliever will ever be sav'd, tho' he holds fome Points which, of their own Nature might fuffice for Salvation. For, such a man believes nothing at all but upon his own Self conceit, and the very Ground of his Fairb, let him prate of Scripture as much as he will, is Spiritual Pride; which Vice alone is enough to dams him, even tho' he held all those Points of Christ's Faith to a Tittle. Hence follows that either the Primitive Church (as hinted above) was very uncharitable in Excommunicating those who differred from those High Articles; Or elfe, the Rule of Faith must be so Plain and Clear that it must preserve those from Herefy who follow it, and render them Inexcufable who by deferring it do fall into the opposit Herefies: And, therefore, that we may bring our Discourse back to the Question, he must either prove his Rule of Faith thus Qualify'd, or 'Tis no Rule. What follows to p. 85. is meer Drollery; which gives all the feeming Strength to his Weak reasoning. Only he has a fling at Transabstantiation, which is a Topick of eourse in his Controversy. He thinks 'tis Unnecessary to the Church; but the Church it feems thought it neceffary to define it, in her Circumstances; and I humbly conceive the necessary occasion of defining it was, because such as He Equivocated in the Tenet of the Real Prefence; and (according to the Drs late Distinction making Not-Regulating to be one fort of Regulating) would needs have the word [Reall] to mean [Not-Reall] whence it was judg'd expedient to put it past quibble by fuch a rigoroufly-express Definition. And I much fear this vexes the Drs Sacramentarian Spirit far more then Transubstantiation it self. I omit, that he has forgot here the Common distinction of what Points are necessary Neceffitate Medij, and what Neteffitate Pracepti. I suppose because:

because this Later did not sute with his Levelling Principles, which set the Church and his Rabble on even Ground

as to Matters of Faith.

64. I alledg'd that those Articles of the Trinity and Christ's Godhead were Fundamentall Points; and therefore if his Rule could not Absolutely Ascertain People of all forts coming to Faith of those Articles, it could affure them of None, and fo is no Rule of Faith. He runs quite away from the Points, and thinks he has done enough to fay, It is Absolutely Certain that God has revealed the Fundamentalls of our Faith. But the Question sticks still, Are you Absolutely Certain by your Rule that the Trinity and Christ's Godhead are Christ's Doctrin or fignify'd with Absolute Certainty by Scripture's Letter? To this he fays nothing, but shifts it off most Shamelessly to another thing. Let him fet himfelf to do this which is his Task, and we will undertake to examin the Nature of his Medium, and show it Inconclusive. I alledg'd that there is Experience, by the Socinians taking the fame way, that his Medium or way to be Certain of this is not Certain. He again turns off Experience that the way he takes is not Certain, to Experience of his Inward Certainty, or his Inward Perfusion. And asks briskly, whether he or I know best? A pleasant Gentleman! Why does he not confute all my Book by that Method? Does he think 'tis enough to show he is Absolutely Certain of the Sense of Scripture as to those Points, with barely faying, he knows he is thus Certain of it better than I? What wretched Shifts are these? In pursuance of this new Method of Proving and Confuting He asks again, How comes Mr. S. to know we are not Certain when we fay we are? Because, when you are most highly Concern'd, and stood Engag'd by promise to show this Absolute Certainty, and are Prest to it Vehemently, and upon the brink of lofing your Credit for not doing it, you fill decline the showing you have any furb Certain-

Ibid.

P. 85.

ty for the sense of Scripture as to those Points. Still he asks, Are not we Certain because some (that is, the Socinians) are not Certain? No, Sir, not barely for that reason; but because the Socinians proceeding upon the Same Rule, are so far from being Certain of the Sense of Scripture as to those Points, that they esteem themselves Certain by the same Scripture of Hereticall Tenets Point-blank Opposit to those Points. Common Reason assures us no End can be compais'd without a Means, and therefore you can never show us Ton are Certain, till you show us you follow a better Way, rely on a firmer Ground, and Guide your felves by a Clearer Light to make you Certain of Scriptures Sense in those passages, than They do: which you can never flow, and, as appears by your wriggling from that Point by the most untoward Shifts imaginable, dare not Attempt. But some are uncertain of Orall Tradition, nay Censure it: I do not know one man but holds and reverences it. It lies upon his Credit to name those who Censure it : For Lominus is a Chimerical name and fignifies no body that he knows. But suppose Some did's yet it being an object of Naturall Reafen, they and I in that case, could not proceed on the Same Grounds or Reafons? as his Protestants and the Socialians do upon the Same Rule of Fauth l'u elicite; white of the the

Certain of his Rule, then he is of the Trush of the Letter of Scripture, in regard the Trush of the Letter of Scripture, in regard the Trush of the Letter. Does he deny this? Or does he show that without the Care of the Church preferving the Letter Right all along, he can have any Such Certainty of the Letter? He not so much as Attempts either. I alledg'd farther that he cannot be thus Certain of the Right Translation or the True Copy; nor that any Copy is True, unless it be taken from the First Originally. Does

P. 86.

he deny this? Or does he show that all these may not fail if the Churches's Care be fet afide? No. neither. What Shift has he then? Why he fays, r. That some of us are Concern'd to Answer this as well as He. Not at all, for those who say that Part of Faith is Contain'd in Scripture, do not, for all that, fay that their Faith is built on Scripture's Letter interpreted by any but the Church; nor do they fay but the Church without Scriptwee could have afcertain'd them of their Faith. 2. He Tays, This firikes at the Authentickness of the Vulgar Tran-Action. Not at all: For we have other Grounds to go upon which they have Not. 3. He skips, after bringing fome words of mine for what they were never inten-"ded, from the Translation, to the Canon of Scripture, which are a Mile wide from one another, that so he may, however he speeds in all the rest, at least talk plausibly of the Concurrent Testimony for the Canen. In order to which, he stands up a Patron for those Christian Churches of his who thus consurr'd; and will not condemn them as not truly Christian till their Cause be better heard and examin'd. Yet 'tis Evident from his Second Letter to Mr. G. p. 25. that some of those Churches were Arians, Nestorians, and Eutychians, condemn'd for Hereticks by most Antient General Councils: which he blames, it feems, for declaring fo rashly against them, and reprieves his Friends from their Centures till a fairer Hearing. It had been happy for them, had Dr. St. presided in those Councils, for he would doubtless have dealt with them very kindly, and have clapt them head and tail together with good Catholicks, into one Latitudinarian Bill of Comprehension. 5. I alledg'd that the same Sense in the heart of the Church enabled and oblig'd Her to correct the Copy when faulty in Texts containing Points of Faith; which, instead of shewing it Incompetent or Disagreeable to the Nature of things, he confutes most Learnedly

P:86. 1. 25.

by pretending that Arbeifts and Unbelievers would be feandalized at it. Whereas they would be much more feandaliz'd to fee no Certain Means affign'd to preferve the Letter right from the beginning (the very first Originals being loft) and all left, (the Charches Care fet apart) to fo many contingences of Translating and Transcribing. 6. We must prove it first tobe impossible for sbe Sense of the Church to wary in any two Ages. As if this had not been providalready, and never yet answer'd but by Shuffles and Eva-Gons. 7. He frames a Plea for the Arians against the Nicene Councill from my Principles: but very untowardly. for the Arians allow'd the Copies, and quoted Scripture as fast as Catholicks did, and yet Err'd most abominably which makes against himself. Lastly, he tells us that 'tis a pernicione Principle, a miferable Account, de. At which I wonder not. For, every thing is miferable and permicious with him that makes the Church good for any thing. Yet he * could grant the Churches Testimony * Dr St's Serwas needfull at first to abett the Truth of the Gospells; Hallpara.sa. and she enjoy'd that Priviledge in * St. Aufting time; * Aug. in and I wonder how the came to lose her Title to God's Epift, Fund, Gracious Providence and Affiftance, or how the came to be disabled in the following ages to preserve the Letter uncorrupted in those Texts that contain'd known Points of Faith. It feems, Translaters, and Transcribers (for the most part Mercenary) are sacred with him, and admirable Prefervers of the Letter; but, alas ! the Mifereble Church is good for nothing. I have already told Cath. Letter him why I hold Scriptures Letter no Rule, how 'tis p. 81. 83. 84 Sometimes call'd a Rule in an improper Sense, and why that Sense is improper, and his Friend Dr. Tillorson has told him what a Rule of Faith means * in our Contro. * Rule of Faith. p. 6. versies; but he never heeds either: but runs on here & p. 40. with frivolous descants upon an ambiguous word, and will needs take [Rule] in a Senfe never meant, nor pof-

fible to be meent in turioiscumfinces. He's not farisfy'd? with the Care of the Council of Transin correcting the Copy. But let him remember I spokenhere of Texts of Inferious Concern, not of those that concern'd Fanh. And why is he not farisfy'd? Did the not do her beff in the prefent Circumstances? How will be prove it & Because Clemens the Schrecall'd and corrected the Bibles put out by Sisting the sth for an exact Edition. But, if both did their beff, according to the Observations were made in their time, and the Light they had then; neither of them were to blame. But all this Humane Diligence amounts not to Ab-Column Correlate as T S. crequires of wi: And is in not more region Lilhould require it of him than be of me fince he makes it (Scriptures Letter) the Proper Rule of Faith, which he knows I do not and yet, which is pleafant he calls upon the aloud to declare as much, and then be knows ben to enforce And now Liknow the true Reafon why he has answer'd nothing hisherto, wiz. because I had mon at Guille not declar'd what I had own'd in all my Books near a thousand times over that we have lost our point by anfwering a multitude of Impertinent Caville, Tis this. The Sanfe of Scripture cannot be abfolistely Cortain, uitless there be Absolute Cortainey the Zerrer is well = Norcan there be Absolute Certainty the Lener is right even in Texts relating to Paith by his Principles, which deny this was perform'd by the Churches Knowledge of the Points of Faith, but by making our with Abiolate Certainty how the Hetter was by forie other Mean's feeur'd from being grong. This he never attempts even in this very occasion when it lay upon him to do it; and therefore, for all his empty flourishes he has faid that noming. Nor has shown on defended that even the Ground of this Discourse Still beats upon this mistake that We do not hold the Letter of Sabtely Cerains in fuch coppe raing Texts:

P. 88.

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Texts whereas we only fay He cannot prove it to be Such by his Principles; and he makes our words good with not performing it, or so much as attempting it. Only he tells us for our comfort, that as to Boyks, Copies, and Tranflations, he has ar high a Certainty as the thing is capable of; and then 'the Rabnels to expect and require more. So that, tho' it happen that the Certainty be but a very fleight one, his kind of Faithfull and Converts may take their choice whether they will be Fools if they will believe it. or Madmen if they will not. He tells us indeed faintly the Faith previous to Divine Faith, manhave abfolute Certainty; but if it only may beve it, it may not have it. In the mean time, what is all this voluntary saying, to his Proving that he has really and indeed Absolute Certainty of those Books, Capies, and Translations, 'Tis his Proofs we lookt for, and not bare Narrations of his own weak Tenets, with which he this puts us off continually, of

66. But how firangely Infincere (if any fuchicarriage could after fo frequent use of it be strange in him) is the Dr to pretend use hold it is in any Churches Power to correct Original Trust because they controlled the scale of the prosens Church. These words he puts into declick Letter as if they were mine; but he cites no place, and if do affure the Reader I have neither such Words nor sense. The first Originals are not extant, & socannot be corrected; & those call'd Originals, which are already atknowledgit, ought as little to be corrected as the other, in heats belonging to the Articles of our faith, when they deviate from the Faith of the Church, on (which is the same) from former Copies allow deby her universally this I is guite.

ben of Books negrific to the Dr to fatisfy up doncorting the Numben of Books negrific to the Rule of Built, and how wirm, will just ferve she sum; as also whether some Book, for any thing P. 91.

thing his Principles can affure us, were not bot. This lay upon him to prove, and this with Absolute Certainty. if he would have Scripture an Intire Rule of his Faith; P. 93. 93. How proves he it?-Why, he makes me mightily concern'd to leffen the Authority of the New Toftament; and that I charge the Christian Church with a Groff Neglett, For all this Noise, he knows well enough that I agree with him, that 'the not in the least probable the Churches bould Suffer any such Book disperft among them to be last, nor de I fo much as suppose they did. What I say is, that he who holds all Humane Authority Fallible, can never prove it Tour they deliver'd down all; unless he can convince the World that a Fallible Medium can prove a thing True; which he cannot do without proving that What may be False is True. Nor can he do This, wishout proving the fame thing may be and not be at once. I wish then he would fet himfelf to work, and prove this abominable First Principle to be Falle: For, otherwise. This alone will confere all the fubftantial parts of his Book, and convince every man of Common Sense, that his Grounds, confest by himfelf to be Fallitte, can never make out, that tis True that he has either Right Letter, or Right Senfe of Scripture, or that no Book in last, or and fo there's an End of his Problematical Faith. I must confess that to prove First Principles False is something difficult; but I have reduc't the business to as narrow a compass as I can, that he may make foor work of it. He recurrs at prefent for want of fome Char Proof to Gods Providence concern'd in preferving Books written by Divine Inspiration, Of which none doubts. But, why should not God's Providence be as much concern'd in preferving his Church from Erring in Faith, that to both all those Backs, their Letters and Seafe might be kept right as far as was Necessary? Or, why was God's Providence the Laft for making the Churches Care and Help the Means to preferve both the ching Books

P. 93:

Book and Letter of Scripture from Suffering detriment? Laftly, why must his Providence be confin'd to only

Translaters and Transcribers?

68. Dr Sr. in his fecond Letter to Mr. G. p. 32. made the Canon of the New Testament the Rule of his Faith. To show the Inconfistency of his Tenets, and utterly overthrow his Pretence of that Rule, I* alledg'd, that If the First Cath. whole Canon be his Rule, then his Rule was deficient for some 59. bundreds of years till the whole Canon was Collected and Asknowledg'd. I prest farther, that, since it must take up some time e're those severall Books were Spread and accepted, fometimes the Primitive Church had according to his Principles, but Three quarters of their Faith. Half of their Faith, or les, and fo were but Three-quarters or Half Christians, according as the several pieces came by degrees to be Universally accepted. For no man of Sense can doubt but that it cost fome time e're the Churches, fo diffus'd, beard of all those Books, and much more e're they could be perfectly fatury'd of the Universal Testimony of the Church Accertaining them to have been writ by men Divinely inshir'd; in regard it was of most Dangerous Confequence to accept that for Gods Word, which was not beyond all doubt fuch. So that we may with reason imagin that some Churches had at first but Two or Three Books of Scripture, others but Four or Five that were well atteffed or could be rely don in fuch a High Concern. Add, that there were divers false Gospells and Spacious Books given out under the names of having the Apostles or Apostolical Men for their Authors; which must have redoubled their care, and made them backward to receive any that were not Authentick, which would take up still more time to examin thoroughly. To press my Argument fill more home, I urg'd that perhaps, according to him, they had no Faith at all during that long Interbecause wanting other Books or sufficient warrant

(126) torely on them, they, by consequence wanted a Multisude

P. 31.

P. 95.

of other Texts, with which they might Compare those they already had, which is one part of his Method to find true Faith in Scripture. To show more the Inconsonancy of his Doctrine, I noted that, notwithstanding all * Second Let- this, * he declar'd that he lookt upon the Primitive tor to Mr G. Church the' fo ill furnish't with his Rule, as on the Best Arbitrator between us in all our Controverses about the Sense of the doubtfull (that is Controverted) places of Scripture. Now, one would verily think this pressing Discourse, following the Point in Question so Close and pursuing it so Home, were exceedingly worth his while to Answer, if he could : fince it toucht his Rule and his Canfe to the quick. Now lets fee what he fays in their Defence. The Substance of his Answer (for all the rest is impertment) is a most doughty and most weighty word [31] If God (lays he) bath fo Abandantly provided for his Church that there may be a full Revelation of all Points of Faith in the reft, then the diffusing the Authority of Sueb an Epiftle meaning that to the Hebrens) doth not derogate from the Compleatness of the Rule of Faith. What's become of his Sincerity and Morall Honefts, which he to profest to Love? Did I fpeak of the Epiftle to the Hebrews? Did not I. not only speak of but most Expressly discourse all along of those many or mast Books of Scripture, not Universally known and accepted at the very first, but by degrees breading and gaining in Process of Time the Credit of being Authentick? Does not my Discourse that by his Principles The Primitive Church bud but Three quarters of her Paith, belf her Faith, or les] barr this Shamming Pretence that I speak only of that Epifile? Or does he think I meant that that fingle Epiftle was helf or three quarters of the Canon of Scripture? And now, Reader, I beg thy leave to infid here upon this Prevarication as an infrance of enegreat Part of his Method in Confuting. He picks

out a word or two which may best ferve him to flip away from the Point; and turn it to quite another businels, but leaves the whole Stress and full import of the Argument Unanswer'd. It were tedious still to reflect how oft he has done thus in this pretended Reply to my Catholique Letters: But, whoever compares his feverall Anfwers to the respective places he pretends to speak to, will fee how dull and infiguificant they are; tho' if he be read alone, especially with an Implicit Belief of his dealing fairly, they look very jolly and brisk. However to divert the Readers Eye he is even with me in another Point. I faid the accepting or not accepting Books whether Third Cath. in the Lairn or Greek Churches was an Act of Prindence An. Letter. p. 572 secedent to the Judgment or Determination of any Church, and fo could not make or marr the Latin Churche's Infallibility in her Fudgment or Detrees. He falls into a gross miflake of the word f Antecedem Jand creets a Trophy of Victory upon his own Errour. To clear which 'tis to be obletved that our Divines admit Prudentiall Confiderations . in any Church, even tho' held Infallible, Previous toher Decrees, & yet do not hold that Church is Infallible in those Acts of Prudence which are thus Amecedent, Now, tho the whole Series of my Discourse there shows clearly that I spoke of an Antecedency in the Course of Humane Altions, or of a Prudentiall Deliberation Anterebent to an Absolute Decision; he turns it to an Antecedency in Chronology of of more Antient Westers; and when he has ap. 1.96.5 ply'd that word to a wrong matter he has the Vanity to infula But, he fays, I fay not a Syllable to his proving hence the Roman Church was not then believ'd Infalible. Surely he never confider'd what he pretends to Answer; for by faying it was not only an Act of Prancace Apiecedent to any Degree, Thow here was no occasion to show what was then believed of ber Thanking of hot be-

writ by St. Paul depended on Testimony, other Churches might perhaps know that better for some time than She. But, the worst is, he was preparing for New Questions, to avoid the danger in keeping to the True one. For he knew the Infallibility of the Church we are here desending, is that of Tradition in delivering down the Do-Brin of Christ; and he does not, sure, judge it a Point of Christ's Doctrin that the Epistle to the Hebrens was write by S. Paul. Add, that when the Church of Rome did Decree any thing at all in that matter, it was for the Reception of that Epistle; in doing which he will not, I hope, say she Err'd. So that our great Dr is out in every particular in which he shows such Considence, or rather he is to talk very Considently whenever he is out, that he may not so be out.

D 97.

69. He puts my Objection against his Universall Confent, of the Testimonies of Marcion, Ebion, Valentinus and Cerinthus, who (as he makes me fay) rejected the Canon of the New Testament; and then asks, Could any man but I.S. make fuch an Objection as this? And, I may, I hope, ask another Question; Could any Manbut Dr St. put Inch a Gull apon his Adverfary and the Reader too? Now, if Ius'd fuch words as [who rejected the Canon of the New Testament] Lipoke Nonfenses for these Hereticks were dead long before that Canon was settled: But if I did not, then he has abus'd me and our Readers too, and done no great right to himself. Let Eye-fight decide it. In my Third Catholick Letter. 2.59. (the place he cites) line 17. 12. my express words are, The Confent of all your Christian Churches for Scripture; and he inftead of Scripture | puts down as my words [The Canon of the New Testament,] I can compassionate Humane Overfight (for it may hap poffibly tho' it can never knowingly to be my own Case) and not too severely impute a mistake in altering my Words, and by them my sense: Yet I must needs say that to put those

those wrong words in the Italick Letter to breed a more perfect Conocit they were mine, and quote the very page in the Margent where no fuch words were found. to make me speak Nousense, looks a little Scurvily; espeoially, because when men have their Eves upon the very Page, as he had, they have an easy and obvious direction to the words too. But, why do I make fuch a Spirefull Reflexion on him as to call them bis Christian Churches ? Because he would needs allow other Sects, as perfectly Hereticall as they were to be [* Christian Churches] tho' cond Letter he was put upon it to give them a distinct Character; to Mr G. and here again he grants them to be pares of the Christian P. 34. 35. Church, tho they be swiff by Lawfull Authority from the body of Christianity. Next, that I may freak my conscience, because I fear, by many passages in his Books, by his ill-laid Principles, and the very grain of his Doctrin and discourses, he judges all to be good Christians who profess to ground their Faith on Seripeire, let them hold as many Herefies as they will. And laftly, for his fieres anger here against me for calling those Hereticks, out The Arians, Nefforians, &cc. which have been Condemn'd by Generall Councils, for I concern not my felf with his Greeks or Aboffins or any others) Excremensitious Outcafts, and that I fling fuch dirt in the face of fo midby Christian Churches. And is not this to cry, Hall fellow, well met? But my Caufe (he fays) is desperate, because I call fuch men Knights of the Post. Yer he knows the Fathers of complain of Hereticks for corrupting the Scripsure : and the Testimony of the Churches Truly Christi. an was Absolutely Certain, without calling in so needlessly Blafted Witnesses. Moreover I told him that the Universall Testimony he produc't did attest the Books, but it must atteff the Chapter and Berte too to be Right, nay each Significant align in the Verfe, otherwise the Scripture could not affure him Absolutely of his Paith. Can he deny this?

P.08.

(130)

this? If the Chapter or Verfe he cites be not True Scripture, or if any material Word in the Verse be alter'd can he fecurely build his Faith on it ? What favs he to this ? Does he deny it, or how that His Grounds reach home to prove these particular Texts or Words to be right, by Univerfall Testimony or any other Medium? Neither of them is his Concern: What does he then ? Why he complains how bardly we are fatisfy'd about the Certainty of Scripture and that we are Incurable Scepticks. Sure he dreams. We are Sainfy'd well enough ; but his Vexation is that we are not fatisfy'd of it by bis Principles; and how should we; if when it was his Cue to fatisfy us, he will never be brought to go feriously about it? And why must we be Seepsiche : when as we both hold the Rectitude of the Letter our folves in Texts relating to Faith. and Affen a way to feoure it Abfalmely, which he cannot ?: Must all Men necessarily he Superists who allow not his News of doing this tho! they propose and Maintain a certain way that penda it & This is a strange way of Confuting. Ho fays There are different Copies in all Parts to examin and Compare, 'Tis thefe very Copies that are in Que-Gions, whether they give Absolute Certainty of every Verse or material Word in the Letter of Scripture, and we expected he should have shown bon they did fo, and not barely name them, and fay there are fuch things. But the main Point is, Must those who are looking for Faith run to all parts of the World, and examin and Comsere allahe Copies e're they embrace any Faith? This looks like a left: Yet'tisa fad the's mad Truth by his Principles. For without knowing this, Scripture cannot be their Rule; and hee'll allow no way to come to Faith but by Scripture; So that, for any Afforance he can give them, (even of his Necessary Points) they must e'n be consent to flay at home, and live and dye without any Faith a fall. He ends, And This I have answer'd ill the

P. 99.

the Objections I have wet with in J.S. against our Rule of Faith. Here are two Emphaticall words [Thus] and [Met] of which the word Thus has such a pregnant Signification and teems with 10 many indirect wiles and Stratagems that it would be an ingrateful task to recount them; and the word [Met] is as Significant as the other. For how should be Meet those that lay in the way, while he perpetually runs out of the Way.

thing manifelt to Soft antiboratege? Our point then it anching like that of denying Motion, nor as it rew-

could not thefe Learned men for a

How folially Dr. St. Answers our Arguments for the Institution of Tradition.

Die does felden & will univer Mr. G. Argument for the infallibility of Oral and Pradical Pradical Machine. With what fuccess we shall see anon. But, fifth he will clear his bad Logick for letting the Argument fland yet in its full force, and falling very manifolly to Compat the Conclusion f and the Common Schie fells each man this is not to infiber but to Argue, yet he will have a going to be Answering for all that. Its his interest to do at folidly, for he has all the World, who in their Diputes follow the contrary Method, to consule this main featon to prove that arguing is a good way to inside it be cause the Argument attempts to prove a thing Impossible, and that its contrary to Sense and Experience to say the Latin and Greek Churches do not differ in what they receive upon Tradition; and so the same Answer that Diogenes gave to Zeno's Argument watest proton by Walling, will know the turn. Let's examin this parallel, in which consists the substance of his Desence of his bad Logick. Does all the World see that the Generality of

P. 140.

P. 101.

the Greek Church proceed upon Tradition in what they differ from the Letin as certainly and evidently as they fee there is Motion? Have not I produc't in my First Catholick Letter, p. 35, reasons enow to shew him how dispurable this point is, none of which he so much as mentions? Did not I there p. 12. quote him out of his own book Peter Lombard, faving, that the Difference between the Greeks and Latins is in Words and not in Senfe? Nay, Thomas a Jefu, Azorius, &c. who were of the same Judgment? And could not these Learned men see a thing manifest to Sonfe and Experience? Our point then .. is nothing like that of denying Motion, nor is it contrary to Sense and Experience, but such as bears a Dispute : amongst intelligent Men and Great Schollars, and therefore, even by the Drs own Difcourse, an Argument or Inflance, brought against the Conclusion was no Answer to the Presider of the Argument brought by Mr. G. and to all the Division he runs upon it here is perfectly frivolous. Nor was Mr G. oblig'd either to grant or deny the Greek Church had Err'd, but was to inlift on an Answer to his Argument; because the Dr had playd foul play, in attacking his Conclusion when he was to enfect his Proof; which if admitted, no Discourse could possible proceed. For, let us suppose Dr. Sr. had been to argue, and had brought this Inflance of the Greek Churche would he have thought it fair that Mr. G., when he was to sufner it should have brought the Argument he made use of in the Conference, and have bid him prove that two Churches following Tradition differ'd in Faith. notwithstanding bis Demonstration that they could not? Or, would it be held a competent Answer to his late Book against the Council of Trems to bid him prove in had not follow'd Tradition, notwithstanding all that a multitude of Learned Catholick Authors had writ to the contrary? I took heart then indeed, as he fays, feeing

the Dr fo Nonplaft, but 'tis his own fiction that I refolo'd P. 101. to grapple with bis Instance, it being impertinent to do is in those circumstances, and so he may thank himself-ifhe were disappointed. I was ty'd to the known Laws of Dispute, and not bound to dance after his Pipe when he strays from all the Clearest Methods of Rosfoning. I' objected that himfelf had defended the Greek Churchs from Erring in his Rational Account; which spoils his. own Inftance of a Church going upon Traditionand Erring: He calls this Triffing, and fays the Diffute was about Mr G's Argument. Yes; but thefe words were not brought to abet his Agreement, but expressly to shew the Drs Inconfonancy to himself, and his Unconscienciousness in arguing from the Greek Churches Erring; whereas it was his Opinion it did not Err. And the Mr G' Answer may be pretended not to be fo par to the particular Demandy yet it was appoint to the main Point that no Church did at once adhere to Tradition and Errat the fame time. For which I gave my reason, because if each Successive Generation follow'd their Fathers Tradition from the beginning, the last Son must believe as the first did. This was too hot to handle, and fo'tis answer'd with Good Night to the Greek Church; which is Learned beyond express fion. Laftly, upon my faying, He might as well have infranc's in the Latin Church it felf; without running fo far as Greece; he takes hence an occasion to accept of the Challenge, tho' it did not look like one, being only fpoke occasionally; and threatens us not with a bare instance but a whole Book against us: He may use his pleasure; tho I must tell him it looks but cowardly to threaten when he's running away from his business, undertaken and not yet perform'd; and leaving the Absolute Certainty of his poor destitute Faith in the suds. One would think it had been the more Compendious Way to overthrow our Caufe, to answer five or fix lines if he could have done it.

P. 103.

P. 104 .

But, he had a mind to be at another Work more fuitable to his Quoting Genins, and hop'd to draw us after him from a Conclusive and short way of Discoursing to an Endless one, of answering every frivolous mil-

understood or misapply'd Citation.

71. But now he will frew us how 'tis Possible to adhere to Tradition o yet ert, A hard Task, if apply'd to our buliness! For fince to adhere to Tradition is still to believe what was deliver'd, to flew that those who adhere to Tradition dorrris to hew that they who fill believ'd the fame Christ taught did not believe the fame Christ taught. A Point foEvident thathis Reflecter could not but grant it. Yet let the Dralone; I dare hold a good wager on his fide that he can by his confuting Method & his Logick prove direct Contradictions to be True without any difficulty, or, as he calls it here, with an Caly Millingion. He begins with two Senfes of Albering to Tradition. One of adhering to it as the Rule and Means of conveying matters of Faith. The other for adhering to the very Doctain taught at first and truely conver'd down fince by Tradition. That is, there are two forts of Tradition or Delivery; One is Tradition, the Other is not Tradition or Delivers, burthe Points deliver'd. Parallel to this is his Distinction of Traditionary Christians. To what purpose is it, to talk Sense to a man who is resolv'd to run ftill fo wildly into Nonfenfe ? Do but fee, good Reader, with what care I had forestall'd this very Abfurd Diftinction in my Third Caebolick Letter, p. 4.5. 9.12. and fhew'd how he had deform'd Tradition into all the untoward Senfes man's wit could invent, by making it now fignify Articles, now Power, now Points deliver'd; yet to convince the World that he connot or rather mult not fpeak Sense, he's at the same work again as briskly as ever: And good reason: Contradictions are better Friends to him than Principles: for nothing more confounds the Reader, which is all he looks after; and to confound him with

T. 104.

with a flew of Diffinguishing, which Nature intended for a way to clear things, does it with a better grace. The fame work he makes with the word [Traditionary] and, tho' he were told what we meant by it Fust Letter, p. 8. and Second Letter, p. 52. yet 'tis never acknowledg'd, but he still runs his Division upon it, as if it were some Ambiguous or Mysterious Word, till he has put the whole Tenour of the Discourse into Confusion. Once more I tell him, and desire the Reader to witness it, that he already knows what we distinctly mean by those words: and, if he will not acknowledge it and speak to the Sense we give it upon our assurance that we never took them, nor ever will take them otherwise, he speaks not to me, nor gives a word of Insper; but, as bassled men use, runs for shelter to meer Brabbles and Impertinencies.

72. And New that is, after he had laid Contradictions for his Principles, he comes to give a Clear and diffinet Answer to our Demonstration of the Infallibility of Tradition. And no doubt by Virtue of fuch Grounds heavill do wonders. Mr. G's discourse was diftinguish't by me in my First Letter p. 8. 9. into four parts or Propositions ; of which, the First is, that All Traditionary Christians believe the same to day which they did Tefferday, and so up to the time of our Bleffed Saviour. Now he knows that by Tradition we mean an Immediate Delivery, and this from day to day; for it would not be Immediate if it were at all Interrupted; and by [Traditionary] those who follow'd this Rule of Immediate Delivery and do Actually believe the fay to day which they did yesterday; and that, If they do not this, they defert this Tradition by Interrupt-Immediate Delivery, and fo cease to be Traditionary Christians. All this he already knows for it has been told him over and over: Whence he cannot but know, tho' he thinks not fit to Acknowledge it, that the Proposition is Self-Evident, and plainly amounts to this, that They

P. 103.5

who believe fill the fame do fill believe the Some ; and the word [Traditionary] was only made use of to express those Persons in one word, because it had been tedious still to use so Many. Could any man but this Gentleman undertake to combat a Propolition fo formally, which is in Sense Identicall and Self-Evident? I took him to be one who would own his Humane Nature which obliges every man to affent to fuch Clearest Truths, and so vainly hop's be had nothing to fay to it. But, as he fays very true,-I was mistaken: for he has many things to fay to lay open the Notorious Fallacy of it in every Claufe. How? Every Claufe? Why, there's but one Clause in the Whole; for the adjoyn'd words and foup to the time of our Bleffed Saviour are the most Essentiall part of it, and distinguish Christian Tradition from that of Hereticall Traditions begun fince Christ's time. So that the Dr makes account that Une fignifies Many. This is but an ill Beginning; and I do affure the Reader all the rest is not a jot Wiser. But, now come the Notorious Fallacies. Why did I not fay that All Christians are Traditionary? Or that All Christians bave gone upon this Principle? Because many are call'd Christians especially by him, who have deferted this Principle, and so have no Title to be call'd Traditionary; But principally, because if we speak of True Christians, that was the thing to be Concluded; for those men are not such, who Difacknowledge a Way of knowing Christ's Doctrin, which is prov'd to give them Absolute Certainty of it. So that it is a Notorious Fallacy, according to Dr Se's new Logick, not to make the Conclusion the very First Propofition of an Argument; and the Fallacy lies in judging that the Last thing should not be the First. Hitherto then this most Learned Logician has not taken one step, without flumbling into a manifest Contradiction. One Single Clause is Many Clauses. Self-Evident Propositions are Notoriously Fallacions. Words, whose meaning have been Darticularte

1 1. 105.

P. 106.

particularly explain'd to him over and over, and fo can have but one Sense as we speak of them, may have Many Senses: Adhering to and following Tradition is not adhering to it and not following it, and the Conclusion or End of an Argument is to be the Beginning of it, or the Proof is to be the Thing Proved. Nor is this any wonder : for 'tis but fit that Self-Evident Truths should only be oppos'd by

Self-Evident Contradictions.

73. Afterthele Noble Performances, he falls into his P. 105. 107. old track of Dividing and Subdividing, he talks of Evidence from the Word of God, from the Guides of the Church, he runs to Infallibly holding to Tradition, (not spoke of Tet, but following in the Argument) he tells us they may go upon another Rule &c. Anticipating thus all the following discourse, and complaining all is not prov'd at once, when as we are as vet but at the very first words of the Proof. There is no End of the Faults and Failings of these Sinfull felf-Evident Truths; Falshoods and Contradictions are Saints to'em : It supposes failly (he says) that the Change in Faith must be fo Sudden and Remarkable, whereas it was Graduall, and so to pitch upon such a Precise and Narrow Compass of time is very Unreasonable. Lastly, to Illustrate and compleat his Answer with an Instance, he tells us, that by the same Method one may demonstrate it to be . Impossible that any Language (bould be Ching'd. By which we may gather that Dr Se's Incomparable Skill in Philofophy, and deep Inspection into the Natures of Things, makes account that Truths are of the same Nature with Quantitative Things or Bodies. All Corporeall Motions, amongst the rest Sounds or Speaking, have a Thousand Indeterminate Degrees between any two determinate Points. Does be think 'tis fo with Truths and Fallboods? Or does he imagin the Thoughts of the Christian World could take a Walk of two or three Hundred years between Is and Is not? Did he never hear that Truths con-

fift in an Indivisible, that he thus compares them to Quentitative or Divisible Natures, and judges the Comparison fo appole? Putting then once the true Notion of the Points in the Head and Heart of the Christian Church. (and, if they were never there the Apostles lost their labour) the least Change in it must change the Point. Did he never reflect why a Tener is Metaphorically call'd a Doint? And that tis because a Point is Indivisible? The putting in the Proposition [to day and Testerday] is to express the Immediatenes of Tradition. Others, amongst the rest the Council of Trent, and many of the Fathers, particularly St. Athanafins, call it [Delivering down by Hands] and the hands of the Children must be Immediate to the hands of their Fathers, else the one could not receive what the other Delivers. Nor do I, or any man living, know how, if the whole Church should be in an Errour but one day, by deferting the Rule of Faith, they should ever retrieve True Faith again, having forfaken the only way toit. Of fuch confequence it is that the Means of conveying down Christ's Faith be Immediate even from day to day. And thus Dr St. has been to answer Mr G's Demonfiration, by keeping fuch a huge pother about a Propofition Evident by its own Light, and pretending more faults in it than even a wife man could have shown in the Arrantest Falsbood. But he has not done with it yet : the most Effential part of it remains yet behind; [And fo up : to the time of our Bleffed Sevieur | Now the Proposition speaks of Believing the same all that while ; and he confutes it with talking of Claiming and Presending to follow it. Whence, fince to believe the fame that was deliver'd, is Actually following Tradition, his diftinguishing Talent has afforded us two forts of following Tradition : One which is really and indeed following it, the other is only pretending to follow it and not doing fo; that is, there is one fort of believing the fame or of following Tradition, which

P. 108.

is not-following of it, which is still of the same Learned Strain.

74. The Second Proposition is I And if they follow this Rule they can never Err in Faith] what fays he to this ? If they follow this Rule, that is, believe the fame from Chrift's time that was taught at firft, do not they believe the same Christ Taught ! One would verily think that this is as Evident as 'tis that, to believe the fame is to believe the fame. True, 'tis fo, and therefore'tis with him Self-Evidently a meer Fallacy. Certainly never was any Mortall Man fuch an Enemy to Common Seufe. But 'tis his confrant humour to talk big when he's at a perfect Nanplus. Well, but how proves he 'tisa meer Fallacy. Why 1. He grants that those who believe Christ's Doctrin cannot Err. And is not this a rare Answer? We both grant that Christ's Doctrine is True, and consequently that who hold it cannot Err: All this is Prefupor'd to our Question, and fo is me part of it. But our Point is how we shall know affuredly what is Christs Doctrin? Or by what Means shall we come at it? 2. He says, They might mifake in this Rule : It has been shown him, Third Cath, Letter, p. 6, 7. 8. 9. and in many other places upon occafion, that they could not miftake in this Rule; & he never takes notice of it in his whole Answer, and yet has the Confidence to object it afresh. 3. He fays, They might follow another Rule. This too has been prov'd against him, nay 'tis bere prov'd in the Fourth Proposition of this very Argument; for by proving they could not innovate in Faith, 'tis prov'd they (that is the Body or Universality) could not defert Tradition. But what a shift is the Dr put to? Do we contend here they could follow no other? All the Proposition pretends to is, that If they follow this Rule they cannot err in Faith. What fays he to this? Can they, or can they not? If they cannot, then the Rule is a good Rule, which is all we labour to prove here, the rest

P. 108.

P. 109.

P. Too.

(140)

is prov'd in the Fourth Proposition. And if they camera tho' following it then, fince to follow it, is fill to believe the fame, the Dr muft fay that the fame Faith tho' ftill convev'd down the same is not the same it self. was at firste which is a direct Contradiction. Not one fingle word of Answer then to the Proposition has he given us, only he affirms foutly 'tis Fallacions (a very Chean Answer to any Argument that is too crabbed and difficult) but he cannot for his heart tell where the Fallacy lies. The Conclusion is naught, that he's refolv'd on, but he has nothing that is pertinent to fay to the Premisses or Proof. Yet, fomething he must fay for a shew; and, so, be will? Thew some other ways that Errours might come in. And perhaps I can shew him twenty more; but, still, what's this to the Point? Can Errours in Faith come in while men follow this Rule of Tradition, that is while they continue to believe the fame that was still taught immediately before, and this ever fince Christs time? This

is our only business.

75. Since I must now run out of the way after our Straggling Disputant, I desire first the Reader would remark, that the Proposition he is now answering is this, If they follow this Rule (viz. Tradition) they can never err in Faith; as alfo that by [Tradition] is meant the Publick Testimony of the Church of-what was deliver'd as Christs Doctrine. His first particular way of introducing Errours, is, by the Authority of False Teachers. But was Tradition follow'd, while they follow'd their Authority? If it was, then the Christian Church was a Falle Teacher. and her Publick Testimony attested false Doctrin to be Christs: which if he holds, let him speak out, and see how all Christians will detest him. If Tradition was not follow'd but deserted when men were led by False Teachers, what's this to us? or whom does it oppose? For 'tis plainly to abet Tradition, to fay that none could follow

Thid.

P. 109.

follow Falfe Teachers, but they must at the same time defert It. 'Tis hard to conjecture then what he meant by alledging de Molinos unless it were to make his Friend Dr Burnets Book concerning Molinos fell. 'Tis no news that False Teachers may introduce Errours; and that that man pretended the Publick Testimony of the Church, or that his whimfies were Christ's Doctrin deliver'd down from the beginning, is both unheard of and Incredible. His Second way of introducing Errours, is by Eutbufiasm. Very well. Did the Testimony of the Christian Church tell them that Enthusiasm was Christ's Doctrin? If he fays it did, he makes the whole Christian Church in some Age to have been a pack of hare-brain'd Enthusiasts. If it did not, then 'tis an honour to Tradition that they deferted it when they fell into that Spiritual Madness. His Third way is by a pretence to a more fecres Tradition. But was this pretence to a Secret Tradition a pretending to follow the Bublick Tradition of the Church? If it was not, it opposes not our Tradition but credits it. And if he fays it was, then he makes what's Secret to be Publick, which is a Contradiction; and the very alledging this makes him in some manner Guilty of that old Failing of his. His Fourth is, Differences among Church-Guides about the Sense of Scripture and Tradition. I have * already shewn him that it was impossible the Genera- * Third lity, especially of Pastours, should not know the soule of Cath. Letter Tradition; and, as for forme Church Guides differing about the Sense of Scripture, it was equally impossible they should Err in Faith, as long as they interpreted Scripture by the Rule of the Church's Tradition; and, when they once left that Rule, instead of being any longer Church-Guides, they became generally if they were any thing, Eminent Ringleaders of Heretical sects; which gives a high repute to our Tradition, even by their erring when they deferted it. His Fifth way how Errour might

P. 111.

come in, is too great a Veneration to some particular Teachers-which made their Disciples despise Tradition in comparifon of their Notions. And were those men Followers of Tradition who despis dit? His 6th is, By Compliance with fome Gentil superstitions, de. But did Tradition or the Church's Testimony deliver down to them these Heathenish Superstitions for Christs Doctrin? Or rather, would it not have preferv'd men from them, had nothing elfe been attended to but that Rule? His 7th and last is by Implicit Faith, that is, that when a man had found's Faithfull Guide to direct him, he should submit himself to be Guided by him in things in which he could not guide himself. A very dangerous case indeed! But the Antidote to this malicious suggestion is, that the same Church that they believ'd, condema'd all NewRevelations, and adber'd only to what was deliver'd. He could have added an Eighth way how Errours in Faith come in had he pleas'd, and That too fuch a one, as had done a thou fand times greater mischief than all the rest put together; viz. Private Interpretations of Scripture; which every man knows has been the fource of all the Herefies fince Christ's time. But this being the fole Ground of his Faith, it was not his Interest to let his Readers know it had been the Ground of all Herely.

76. But what's all this to the Point? Or how is the Demonstration lost if many men err'd upon divers other accounts so none err'd while they follow'd Tradition? Unless he proves this, he establishes our Demonstrations by his shewing how multitudes err'd who were led by other Motives and by his not being able to produce so much as one Instance of any that err'd by adhering to st. What Noise and Triumph should we have had, could he have alledg'd so many Hereticks sprung up by grounding their opinions on mistaken Tradition, as 'tis known have arisen by grounding their wicked

Te 112,

wicked Tenets on millunderstood Scripture? But alas! tho' that were exceedingly to his purpole, not one fuch Instance could he bring. He talks a little faintly of the P. Bet. Arians, Pelagians, Neftorians, dre. not diforming Tradition. But does he hope to perswade any man of Sense those Upftarts durft ever go about to put out the eyes of the World by pretending their Herefies were deliver'd down as Christs Doctrin by the Publick Testimony of the Church in their days, or out-face the present Church that the her felf had taught them what she knew themselves had newly invented? Or would the have condemn'd them had they . spoke her thoughts or follow'd her Dostrin? With what Sense can any of this be imagin'd? The Tradition then which they went upon was Citations of some former Authors, which they misunderstood, the very Method Dr St. and his fellow Quoters take now a days) or else the Judgment of a few Foregoers; of whom some might speak ambiguously, others perhaps hanker'd after their Herely. 'Tis very hard to guels what Dr. St. would be at in alledging so many ways how Errour might be introduc't. That it might come in, and by Various ways no man doubts. That it came in meerly by following Tradition or the Churches Testimony he says not. That particular Multitudes might be feduc't by deferring Tradition, is equally granted, and needs no Proof. And that it came in the Men Adher'd to Tradition (which was the true Point) he goes not about to prove nor feems fo much as to think of. Befides most of the Ways he affigns if not all, are so many Defertions of Tradition which highly conduces to Screngthen our Argument; while he impagns it: Yet furely that could not be his Intention neither. I cannot imagin then what all these seven Formall Heads are brought for, but to make a Show of none knows what. Sometimes, I incline to think he is combating the Fourth Proposition, proving the

the Body of Traditionary Christians could not innovate in Faith but either through forgetfulness or Malice. And yet I cannot fix upon this neither; both because he names not these two defects before he shows us his other ways of Erring; as also because we are not come as yet to the Fourth Proposition where all the Stress lav, but have spent all our time in confuting the First and Second, which were Self-Evident. But, if that be his meaning as he intimates p. 112. to escape replying to the Fourth Proposition, then let him know that, whatever his unfound Principles fay, whoever deferts the Testimony of God's Church whether by the Authority, (or rather No-Authority) of Falle Teachers; or, by Enthuliasm, the root of which is Spirituall Pride; or, by following Secret Traditions against the Publick Authority of the Church; or, by adhering to a Sense of Scripture contrary to what Tradition allows; or by too great a Veneration to some particular Teachers; or by Compliance with Heathenift Superstitions; or, by whatever other Motive, is Guilty before God of a Heinous Sin, and it must spring from some degree of Malicious or Bad disposition in his heart. For he cannot but See that himself or his Leader breaks the Order of the World by disobeying, rising against and preferring himself before those whom God had set over him to feed. direct, instruct and Govern him. Of which Order, and of the Goods coming by it, and the Mischiefs which attend the Violating it, none of Common Sense, whom some by-affection has not blinded, can possibly be Ignorant.

P. 111.

77. He concludes with these words [If then Errours might come into the Church all these Ways; What a vain thing it is to pretend that Orall Tradition will keep from any possibility of Errour!] Ah, Dr. Dr. I Where's your Love of Moral Honesty? Where's your Sincerity? Where your Conscience? Did ever any man pretend that Tradition will

keep men from any Possibility of Errour whether they follow it or no? Were not our most express words put down by your felf, p. 108. 1. 27.28. [If thep follow this Rule they can never Err in Faith. And must those most important words be fill Omitted, and no notice taken of them but only in an absurd Distinction, making * Adhering to Tra- * See above dution or Following it, to be Not-Following it? Is this Solid 5. 72. & 74 Answering or plain Prevaricating? Again, what Nonfense does he make us speak by omitting these words? Is it not a Madness to say, a Rule will direct them Right that do not Follow it? That a Means will bring a man to his End, who does not use it? That a Way will keep a man from Straying in his Journey who does not walk in it? Yet all these Contradictions we must be Guilty of by his leaving out the words [If follow'd] 'Tis pretty too upon review of his words to reflect on his Craft ['Tis vain to pretend that Orall Tradition will keep-] whom was it pretended to keep from any Possibility of Errour? He should have added The followers of it but because he had Slipt this all along, he leaves the Sense Imperfect, and the word [keep] must want the Accusative Case after it, due to its Tranfitive Sense by the Laws of Grammar, meerly to avoid his putting the Right one, because it would have been unfutable to all his foregoing Discourses, which never toucht it. But, fince he speaks still what Causes of Errour he has shown, tho' I have already manifested, that all those Causes were accompany'd with Malice in the First Deserters of Tradition, yet to enforce our Demonstration the more, I discourse thus. If Tradition could be deferted or Innovation in Faith made by the Generality of Christians for none ever faid or doubted but Many Particulars might do fo) it must either proceed from some Defect in their Understandings or in their Wills. A defect in the Will is call'd Badness or Malice; whence, if they willfully Innovated, it must spring from some degree of . Malice.

Malice. If in their Under fanding; then it must either be in that Power as Apprehending, or Knowing Christ's Do-Grin: or as Retaining it. It could not be in the Former, for none doubts but the body of the Church, particularly the Teachers who were to instruct the Rest, did very well Comprehend Christ's Doctrin in the Beginning, and the many Clear ways Tradition comprizes to deliver it down, renders Faith Intelligible still to each succeeding Age. Wherefore fince the Defect cannot be in their Underflanding or their baving Christ's Doctrin in their Hearts, it must be (if any where) in that knowing Power as 'tis Retentive, that is in their Memory. But, it was abfolutely impossible the Generality of the Church should be so weak as to forget in any little determinate part of Time (by which Immediate steps Tradition proceeds) what was Taught and Practis'da little before ; or Confidering: the Motives to keep them firm to it) fo Wicken as to confire to Alter it purposely. Therefore whatever Contingency there must be in some Particulars, it could not be that the Generality of the Church should have alter'd it, or consequently, Err'din Faith. Wherefore this Comelulion stands yet Firm, the Premisses remaining yet Unzoucht: Since he neither shows nor can show more Faculties in Mankind engag'd in the Perpetuating the Former Faith than these Two. Add, that he does not even Ar tempt to show that the Causes he produces can have the Power to prevail or carry it against the force of Tradition: and unless he does this, all he alledges signifies nothing. But his Especial Reason why he gives no other Anfiver (he should have faid nove at all) to our Fourth Propofition, is, because he intends to few in a particular Discourse, how the Errours and Corraptions he Charges on the Church of Rome did comeintoit. That is, we cannot have an Anfwer to Two lines but by perufing a Large Book. I would defire him to resume the Force of all his little Testimo-

Third

p. 6. 7. 8.

Cath. Letter

P. 113. 113.

nies, and Conjecturall Descants upon them, with which that book abounds, and to be sure they Conclude the Point; which he shall never do. And unless he does this, he only shows he has taken a great deal of pains to no kind of purpose; since he leaves a presum'd Demonstration in its sull force, without bringing so much as a pretended Conclusive Proof against it. Indeed, it is a great shame for him to pretend it, for 'tis to profess publickly to the world that he can produce Better Arguments against the Papists then he can for his own Faith; and that he cannot Answer the Argument, or say any thing to the Premisses, yet he will revenge himself upon the naughty Conclusion, when he catches it alone, and unback't with any Proof for th.

78. Next, he will prove that our way of resolving Faith into Christ's and his Apostles Teaching, by the Infallibility of the Church's Human Authority or Tradition is Pelagianism. But never was fuch a Malicious and Silly Charge fo impotently defended. We were told (fays he) that Divine Faith must have Infallible Grounds, and when we come to examin them we find nothing but what is Naturall. Here again our whole Controversy is loft, and a new State of the Question is obtruded. Faith as 'tis formally Divine has for its Grounds the Divine ambority; But are we in our Controversy Examining it as 'tis Formally Divine? Do either of us alledge Miracles, or any Arguments that Proves it to be fuch? Is it not Confest and Suppos'd by both Parties that the Faith Taught as first was Divine: and are we to Examin what's Confest and Granted? Or, that Supposition being agreed to, have we any more to do, but to prove what was the Doctrin taught at first, by Affigning a Certain Method of Conveying it down to us? He proceeds; And now to avoid the Charge of Pelagianism, this Divine Faith is dectar'd to be meer Human Faith. Alas for him! Does not Divine Faith stand yet on it's own bottom, the Divine Amhority, because Haman

P. 113.

Authority,

Authority, gives those who yet know it not, Assurance of its Derivation to us? The Immediate effect then of our Tradition is Human Faith; the Remote effect is to give us knowledge of a Doctrin of Faith which is Divine; not prov'd to be fuch by Tradition, but acknowledg'd to be fo by our Mutuall Concession. But how shamelesly infincere theDr is to object that I Chang'd this purposely to avoid the Charge of Pelagianism: whenas he knows I had told himfelf the same in Errour Nonplust, some years before any Contest arose about my Writings? Does he not cite my words here, that this Human Faith had by Tradition, leads us to what's Divine ? Human Faith is the Way or Means to know Divine Faith; And cannot we obtain the favour of him to intermit a while his constant Nonsence. and allow the Means to be diffinguisht from the End? He goes on : And fo Human Faith must have Infallible Grounds, but Divine Faith must shift for it Self. Can any thing be more Trifling? What Shifts is Faith put to for Grounds, taken as 'eis formally Divine, in a Controversý which supposes it such; in which case no Proof nor Grounds for it need be produc's? Do those that holds the Infallibility of the Churches Humane Authority deriving it down to m, deny but the Vericy of the Mysteries thus deriv'd, as in themselves, depend on Divine Revelation as on their Formall Motives? Do not these two consist well together? May not Faith depend on the Divine Authority in it felf, and as it was made known at first, and yet not be known to us who live now but by Humane Authority. Can he be Certain of Christian Faith by his own Grounds, but by the Book of Scripture, and yet does not himfelf fay, that the Certainty he has of that Book, depends on Tradition or Humane Authority, and consequently that Humane Faith is the way to know Divine Faith? What Quacking then and Mountebanking is this, to make me a Pelagian for doing the same himself does and publickly avows:

avows; omitting in the mean time my Answers which at large * clear'd before hand, all that he has here fo * Third weakly and infincerely objected? Laftly, he tells us, that Cath. Letter, from p. 18, if Divine Faith fixes not on the Infallibility of Tradition, them to p. 28. we may have Divine Faith without it. Yes, by his Enthusis aftick Principles, but not by Connatural ways; fince himfelf must acknowledge that neither the Letter nor Sense

of Scripture is Absolutely Certain without it.

79. It would be very pleasant to see how this Gallant Caviller would prove St. Paul a Pelagian Heretick. That Blessed Apostle affirm'd that Fides per auditum, Faith comes to our knowledge by Hearing: For the Certainty of the Primitive Faith was resolv'd into the Certainty of the Senses, as the Means to come to the first knowledge of the Doctrin, and of That Sense more particularly, because Preaching was the Way of instilling Faith then, Now comes Dr St. and (having pray'd, I suppose for Wifdom before hand) tells that Holy Apostle, that Divine Faith must have Infallible Grounds, but that the Certainty of the Senses is meerly Natural; That he runs from Divine Motives to Humane ones. He asks him fmartly, what In fallible Ground is there for this Divine Faith, and where is fixes? If not on the Certainty of the Sanfes, then we may bave Divine Faith without them. If it does fix on their Certainty, then Divine Faith is to be refolv'd into Naturall Means. And what is this but Pelagienism? Thus the flus pendionly Learned, and more then supernaturally Enlighten'd Dean of St. Paule, has clearly prov'd ter. Paul himself an arrant Pelagian. But, if St. Rent should answer as I do that he spoke not of Divine Faith, or the Dostrin of it as in it felf, or as 'tis formally supernatural, but only of Divine Faith as standing under Natural Means for us to come to know it, then it would follow that it would require higher Grounds to be refolu d into as tis Divine, & ver, for all that, that he could have no Faith at all, nor certainty

Argumunt

Means to give him knowledge of it. But our Verball Controvertist never reflects that there may be divers Resolutions made of Faith as 'tis controverted, according to the nature or exigency of the Dispute. Against a Deist that holds it not Divine, it is to be resolv'd into the Divine Authority, and this must be shown to be engaged for it, by those Motives of Credibility which prove it to be such. But this is quite besides our present Dispute, since both parties grant it; and, consequently all his Discourse here is

quite befides the purpofe

80. I doubt not but the Dr would have had another fling at St. Paul for Pelagianifm, in case he would not allow that a Pions Disposition of the Will did make the verdict of the Sense of Hearing Certain, and piece out the Deafibnes of the Auditours, when that Sense had fome Imperfection; as he does here, by making me a Pelagian for faying the Will's Affistance cannot make an Argument if it be defective. Especially should we both fay, that Dr Se's Moral Qualifications, Purity of Heart, Humility of Mind, and Prayer for Wifdom, would not make a deaf Ear hear well, or a bad Argument conclude. For both our cafes are perfectly Parallel; fince we both speak of the Way to come at the Knowledge of Divine Faith. But his Logick, I fee, would have his Readers (when an Argument drawn from meer Nature is propos'd which is short of Coneluding, let it be in Phylicks, Metaphylicks, or what he will. for it alters not our case) shake their heads very pionly, and answer f Truly Sir, the I fee your Renfon does not conalude, or fatisfy my Understanding, that the thing you would prove is True, yet out of a Pions Inclination to the Caufe, I will call in my Wills Afiftance, and out of pure Goodnes think it does constade, and that the Thing is for all that, really True. I would wish him by all means to maintain fill that tis Pelagianism to deny that the Inconclusiveness of an Argument

T. 114.

Argument is supply'd bythekind-heartedness of the Will. Nothing in the World but this can justify all his Infignificant Proofs,& make them pass for valid & good ones. 'Tis ridiculous he fays, to alledge that I refolve all into Christ's and the Apostles Teaching. Why? Is it not agreed on between us, that Christ is Gov, and his Doctrine Diffine? And is not this to bring us to Divine Fairb, if we prove it to be His Doctrine? Or is it not enough for our purpose when 'tis confess'd on both sides that Christ's Doctrine is Divine? Why is it then ridiculous to protess we do this? Because Calestius & Pelagius did the very same. And fo I must be a Pelagian still; that's resolv'd on. Those Hereticks did indeed presend their Herefies were Christ's Doctrin; But this is no particularity in Them, for every Heretick fince Christ's time did the fame; else they had not been Hereticke, but Pagans, Jems, Turks, or Deifts: But, we go no further upon this Principle than they did. Why? Did they ever alledge, that the Tradition or Immediate. Testimony of the Body of the Church, deliver'd down their Doctrin for Christ's? Or durst they difgrace themselves by going about to avail themselves of such an open and Notorious Lye? This he should have prov'd folialiand elearly: But, instead of proving it, he barely for it; and who will at this time of day believe his mora? And vet. if he does not this, every fincere Reader must see that he has facrified his fincerity to his spite against Catholicks, and judges Slander and Calumny no Sin. Observe here by the way his confittency with himself. In his Second Letter to Mr G. p. he affirm'd, that we refolo'd All into meer Humane Faith; and here he confesses we refolve all into Christ's and his Apostles Teaching. Had not I then good reason to ask him if Christ was a meer Man, it falling in fo Naturally? Yet he is mighty angry atthofe words, and fays he gave no accasion for them, and imputes it to Malice. I do affure him that I us'd those words to

P. 114

Ibid.

Thew !

flew that by resolving All into Chell's Teaching, I resolved Faith finally into what is confessedly potent. Why he should take it so to heart, or apply it to himself when it was not in the least intended, his conscience best knows. However, it puts him to make a Profession of his Faith in that point; which I heartly pray may be sincere.

D.115.

* Dr St's Second Letter to Mr G.

82. The last point which he thinks fit to take notice of, omitting (by his favour) many which were more concerning, is, that the Council of Trent * difowns a power of making Implicit Articles of Faith contain'd in Scripture to. become Explicit by its Explaining the Sense of them. He proves this, Because the Church of Rome doth not pretend to make New Articles of Faith, whereas to make Implicit Doctrines to become Explicit, is really fo to do. This a little varies from what he faid in his Second Letter; nor can I find a word of making New Articles of Faith pretended there, and I am fure there are none such in that place. Yet ftill he would put it upon the Council to introduce fome Articles by new Explications of Scripture; but he only fars it, not proves it; and fo, till Proof comes, let it rest upon his bare Word, which fignifies little. Other Answers I have given to this Point, (Third Cath. Letter, p. 64. 65.) which fince he has taken no notice of, I shall presume they stand good in their full force.

83. He concludes with these words, [But, because the Council of Trent doth present to Apostolical Tradition for the Points there determin'd, and the showing that it had not Catholick and Apostolick Tradition, it the most Effectual Consutation of the present Presence of Oral Tradition, I shall reserve that to another Discourse; part whereof, I hope, will suddenly be publish't.] Now who sees not that, since a Demonstration for the Infallibility of Tradition is the most Effectual, and most Compendious Proof that is Imaginable; and unless it be answer'd, most necessarily concludes the Descent of that Faith from Christ which is held upon

it; and that the Evidence of fuch a Proof confifting in the Necessary Connection of the Terms which are us'd in it, has the Self-fame force whether the Council of Treat, or any Council, had ever been held, or not; who fees not. I fay, that this is a meer plaufible Shift to avoid the shock of our Arguments and to run the Pield by the fillnecessary; and Seill Friendly Affiliance of his former bad Logick, viz. of Arguing against the Conduston instead of Answering the Premilles? And, therefore, that his proper Conclusion, had he spoken out Candidly, should have been this. [But, because I was weither able to flew the Absolute Certainty of Christian Faith by my Principles, nor to make out that the Rule I book Affen'd does tofluence any Point of Faith, fo as to prove it to be Abfolisely Certain, that tie Christs Doctrin; nor yet able to Answer their close Arguments against the Absolute Certainty of Mine, or for the Abfoliose Certainty of the Catholique Faith, therefore to come off handlowely before I atterly lofe my Gredit, I think it the fafelt and wifest Expedient to let the Premiffer alone or past over them with fome fleight touches, and to Combat the Conclusion by Quoting of Auchors, und tacking the Two differute Matsers together as well as I can, fo to make a kind of I sanfition from the One to the Diher, I will fer my felf to write against the Council of Treat. Abufinefa whichwill take mightily in this Juncture; Nor will many Readers much concern themselves in cafe they [bould observe it, bow I have drops the Question, or brank away from my Advertage And to a good fournew to the Drs Rambling Read will meet him next in the Field where we fought Def : Whither, in the behalf of Christian Saith, whole Certainty he has here Undermin'd I do recall and Challenge him. . I s native to beste

to dear his own express words (Englisher, p. 7.) which put the Proof upon Mr. G. and then, to turn Absolute Sertainty of his Protestant Eaith, which confiss of a determinate Municer of Points, into Certainty of Serietme:

rioid w

the Mecellary Connexion of the Terms which are us'd in it, has the Sel OLTODE & Smibolous of the meil of treme.

orene Council had ever been held, or not : 84 LI Icherto of Doctor See Sins of Commission; wis. of his Groundless and Smoertinent Calumniet, his manifest Paishoods against his own Knowledgevhill som fram prevarication from the Question in every respect, and this quite thorough his whole Answer; his bad Lagick laid open in many Inflances, his Shifts and Evefions, his Paralogisms, Cavils and Contradictions. Now follow his Sine of Owifice. By which I do not mean his Failing to give a good Answer to thate Arguments he thought fit to take notice of ; for this, as has been shown in every Particular, would spread one Universal Blot over his whole Books but his not to much as Accempting to give the Resions I alledg'd to prove them, or other paraicular Omifions abang dupon him, and Answer at all, or caking the feat affrice of them about falle has

85. To begin with my First Carbolish Latter, or the Amwer to Dr. Se's First Letter to Mr. Q. Why might First Catho. We not know the particular Reason but Mr. 7 came to be

factsin'd; this being of fath special Concern, and lay-ing so preside an Obligation upon its too hear that Point? but changing his making a Secret of Mr. Y's convincing Reason, which was required of him, p. g. 4. into his making a Secret of the Ground of his Gereamen, (p. 16.) Why

did be ruen it of so Mr. C. to thew that the Doctor's Protestants ber wes Abiblute Certainty of shele Baith, whenes he had taken it upon himself to for they bad? but inflead of giving a Reason for that carriage of his,

to deny his own express words (Firft Letter, p. 7.) which put the Proof upon Mr. G. and then, to turn Absolute Certainty of his Protestant Faith, which confists of a de-

terminate Number of Points, into Certainty of Scripture; which

Letter. p. 4

which perhaps may not fignify to much as one Point of Paith, unless he thew Ablohute Certainty that the Letter of it is rightly under food in those Texts that contain those Points? which he is so far from shewing that he not fo much as goes about it. Why no Reply to our Proof that Mr. G. has, by doing his own work, at the same time perform'd what the Doctor would needs have put him upon; viz. prov'd that Doctor S's Church has no Certainty of its Faith? Why conceal'd he the true Meaning of the word [Traditionary] given by us, but took it purposely in another Soule, and then rally 4 upon it? Why no notice taken of our Explication of those words [If they follow'd this Rule] declar'd by us to mean the Believing fill the fame] which had forestall'd his illgrounded Defeant upon them (p. 108, 109.) and why no regard to that most Important Conditional Proposition, but fearting afide to ways how Errours might come in by not following it; which instead of Answering, afferts and makes good our Tenet? Why no Reply to our feve P. 10. 11. 12. ral Ressent brought against his intollerably bad Logick, 13.14.15. & shewing at large from many heads the absurdity of it, P. 33.34.35. and that the Subject of our Argument, as impuga'd by his Inflance, was not at all like Zeno's denying of Monon a which Reafons had prevented and utterly defeated his pittiful! Defence of it here? Why nothing to the unavoidable force of our Argument, manifesting it to be P.18. Self-evident that Tradition is a Certain Rule! Why does he not justify his palpable Prevarication from the whole P. 31, 23, Queftion laid out at large & prov dagainft him, 2.21.22. Why not a word of Answer to my Discourse shewing Absolute Certainty & Infallibility to be the same? Why does he no where diffing aith thinfelf & his Protestants P. 25. 26, from all for got Heacticks coming the fame Common Rule; by thewing as by what Persunder Meanthe is more Certall of the Tree Senfe of Scripeure then they were, and

P. 8. 0.

P. 23.

thence different's from them by his having fome particular Rule of Westo arrive at True Fach which they bad not; This being a Point of the Highest Importance in our Controverly, and most Earnestly prest upon him over and over? And yet for all his flourishes about Criterions he has faid nothing to those Reasons, only he has made a fleight Discourse of his own, p.53 54. but never shew'd any particular Means securing his Party from Erring, more than the vileft Hereticks us'd. Why little P. 36. 27. 38. or no regard to my Reasons shewing that Scripture Interpretable by their private Judgment of Diferetion is not the Rule which the Generality of Protestants rely on : which, if true, utterly overthrows his whole Pretence to That for his Rule? He blunders indeed about it in clear words, and tells his own Tale very prettily; but he has not answer'd my Ressons, as the Reader may discern, who is pleas'd to compare them with his Reply. Laftly. why no Answer to each particular Proposition of my Short Difcourfe, or hewn it inconnected, demonstrating that some who follow'd his Rule can have Affarance that what they believe is Chris Bodie . But intead of this Duty, bringing presended Halfe Suppositions against the Whole, which suppos'd nothing but that we could have no more Reason to judge the Sociaiens Infincere, or Careless, or less Skilfulkin the Sense of words than we have

tholick Letter. As for my Second; fince his Title protends an Answer to them All in Gonerall, and he referrs us to another able to fpeak for bimfelf, meaning his Refletter, we are to imagin he makes account he has Answer'd them All, by Himfalfor by his Prony, But, good God Is what an Anfwer has that week man given us? His Difference is a Cheer of Sand. Lists, mels of Controverly diffit up in Sippeta; a mear Hafa of Repartees, or rea

29.

P. 30. 31.

epinents

fon torn into Raggs: A Difcourfe, as every man knows, has it's true Force by the Confrant Tenour ofic; and this Tenour's fhatter'dall to pieces by a new invented Method of short Dialogues; where he makes me, at his pleasure, fay as fittle at a time as he lifts, and he plays upon it as much as he pleases. I must break off just where he thinks fitting, and he Enlarge against an imperfect Discourse, unaffifted by it's Comparts, as long as he Judges convenient. Now he's at the beginning of my Book, and immediately at the Middle or End of it; gathering thrumsends of little Sentences, which he patches together fo aukwardly that they have no Connexion as all but what his unskillfull or Partiall hand bestows upon them. If we expect Reason from him, he tells us he never undertook to Prove but to Reflect. A very pretty come-off ! I wonder what Answer is proper to a man who proverse: thing, nay not fo much as Undertook it I Thus much for his Method: But the Tricks and Shifts in managing it are Innumerable: 'Tis almost as easy to determin how many words may be made of the four and Twenty Letters, as to trace all the Anagrams he makes of my Senfe. by weaving it in bis loom to fute his own Pancy or Intereft. When our Queffion is only about a Corrain Rule of Join, he alters it when he lifts, to a Certain Rule of Life (1.22.) as if we pretended Scripture not Clear in Morall Points; by which means he turns the whole Question to a quite different Subject. His Contradictions are freconcerns our Dispute but he constantly falls into that irrecoverable laple. As he turn'd the pregife Duty of proin of Paffications hetells you (p. 72.) he meanthem foll frieds: And hillerd his whole References (if I may call it fo) is nothing but continued from ; it being very hard to know when he's in Jeft, when in Earnest a Only

Only he garnishes his Scorn with denure presences of Charity and Civility, that so he may affront his Adversary with a more plausible Garb of Affected Gravity and Godliness.

87. As for the strength of his Resions, since one Inflance is held by Dr St. and him a Competent Answer to a pretended Demenfration, I hope one pregnant Infrance how he quite milles the whole matter in hand, may be allow'd sufficient to render infignificant his Hopeing and Skipping Dialogues, by thewing plainly that his ill-levell'd Reflexions hit not me, but squint afide to other Subjects. E're I come to my Instance, I desire the Reader to bear in Remembrance (for I cannot repeat it too often because my Adversary is resolv'd never to take notice of it) that, Our Controverly Suppofer as agreed to by borb Parties that Christ's Doctrin is Divine, and that our Whole Queftion is about the Means to bring down to us thele Subline Spiritual Articles of Christian Faith, with fuch a Containty and Clearnes as may oblige us to affent firmly and unalterably, that what we hold concerning them now at prefent is the felf-fame that was taught by him and his Apofiles; and confequently is Devine and True Next, we affirm that the Letter of Scripture not being Clear to people of all forts looking after Christ's True Doctring in those Texts which relate to fuch High Points. the best way to satisfy such men that those Articles came down invariably from Christ is the Humane duthority of the Christian Church, And, Lastly, that the Crediblehels of this Authority is prov'd by Intrinfical Mesent, 12 Ken from the Natures of Things lying levell to our Realon. which contribute to support it from being liable to be destivid or to deceive us in that affair : or from ! Manura of Abandaho being a Retired Continue canno possibly act without a Morive or a Reason; and is with all endowed with Such and Such Faculties belonging vin G

fuch a Nature Avallo from the Practical Nature & Highen Import of the Doctrin to be deliver'd, and the Nature. of thole must powerful Motives obliging the Generality to whom they are apply'd, to transmit down faithfully a Doctrin held Divine; and, Laftly, from the Nature of divers Circumstances of the Universe. All which are faid out in my Second Cath. Letter, p. 77. 78. 79. 80. To which nothing but a very fleight return (with many Omissions) has been given us by Him, and nothing ar all. by Dr St. tho' thefe (as the Reader may fee if he pleafes to review them) be the most forcible pare of that Treatife to prove the uninterrupted Perpensity of Tradition hitherto, on which the Refolution of our Grand Queftion mainly depends. 'Tis enough, it feems, for fuch a trifling Reflector, at the end of his Pamphlet, to call the paffages he has omitted, amongst which are the Natures of thole things, Hedges and Publies; and clofe Reafons drawn from thom fricking Funcier; and that's all can juffly be expetied from one who feems to be a fworn Schollar to the Great Professor of Learned Jests and Ingenious Prevarications.

88. These particulars concerning our Tenet, known to all that have read our Controversy, being reflected on, let's see how this Gentleman represents it, and how profoundly he discourses against us. In his 12th Page he will needs repeat our Tenet, or (as he with much Formality is pleas'd to call it) the Lessons beve ranges him: which, put into distinct Sentences, he makes to be this. Tour Churches Authority is also Divine, and as such 'tis the Rule of Faith to those who are already Faithfull: But in our Controversy, which is about the Way for men to come to Faith, the not proper to the age any other than her Name of or Huminar Bathority, Consisting of a vast Body of Man both was and while decreasity fuch open must-

(16d)

ters of Fact as is the Delivery of a Dollarin fo Qualify'd by those that chared us; And the Resion is because 'all men come at Chris's Faith they can only guide themfelves by their Reason; whence the Credibility of that Authority must be provable by Reason winst those who shall deny it. 2. He fays, Is but force to prove the Truths which depend uponit. Yes; it has force to prove to of this matter of Fact, that those Truths defended from Christ ; but not the Intrinsical Truth of any one Article in it felf. To do this is the work of Divine Revelation, Inot Of Humane Authority. 2. It bas this force and concludes against fuch as own its Venecity, but it deserves no Affent further then Reason gives it to deserve. Well then, since we bid him guide himfelf by his Reason e're he admits it, will he at least admit it and yield affent to it, when Reafon thews him it deferves it? This is all we defire of him; and 'tis a very reasonable request in us, for it only defines he would not renounce his Reason and forfeit his Manfrood, Now come his Conclusions from mistaken Premiffes : Hence Iconclude, Seeing We admit not your Church'es Authority, nor own its Peracity is proves nothing to we nor rencluder any thing against us. From what Antecedent is this Conclusion drawn? Did we ever press him to admit it blindly; the Point is, will he renounce bis Reafor when it tells him this Authority ought to be believ'd? This is our Tenet and should have been taken in e're he had inferred anything at all : but then it would have marrid his Conclusion and his admirable Method of teking every Discourse of mine to pieces and never putting it together again, and fo it was thought expedient to neglect it. His next Conclusion is, Seeing Articles of Faith dependings on Manney Authority your Charch'es Authority san bave no effect on Manney Manney o oblige to a Belief of them. Where we have near the many Faults as Words. Box, First, Articles of Paith Manney or as to their for First, Articles of Paith Manney or as to their Intrinsical Ters

Intrinsicall Verity, depend only on the Divine Authority as their Formall Motive; but, as to us, or as to our knowledge of those Articles Now, which were taught by Christ long fince (which is our only business) a fuccessive Human Authority, the most strongly supported of any that ever was in the World to convey down a matter of Fact of Infinit Concern, is the properest way to Attest them; whence all those Articles, in that regard do depend on that Human Authority, after the fame manner as even himself also holds the Book of Scripture does. Secondly, What an Incredible Folly is it, not to diffinguish between those Articles which were Taught at First, (and, fo, are Divine) as in Themselves, and the same Articles as Knowable by us Pow to have been Taught Long ago? nor to reflect that our Controversy only treats of them under this latter Consideration? Nor to know that, thus Consider'd, All Articles of Faith not only May but Must necessarily depend on buman or Natural Means, fince without Such they cannot be introduc't into our understandings connaturally, nor by any way but by Immediate Inspiration, which is perfect Enthusiasm? Nor Lastly, not to advert that even the Divinity of Faith depends, in some fort, on Natural Means ? St. Paul tells us Faith comes by Hearing; and, if fo, then Faith depended on Hearing as to its coming to be Known by us. Nay, as Christian Faith was Formally from God, it depended thus on Miracles, which could not be known to be fuch but by their being above the Course of Nature; nor could they be known to be above the Courfe of Nature unless the course of Nature it felf had been fore-known, the Knowledge of which is only Naturall or Human. Thirdly, His following words in this Ridiculous Conclusion, shew him ut-terly ignorant of our whole Question; otherwise he could not with any degree of fincerity have put it upon us, that we hold the Human Authority of our Church obliges

figes to a Belief of the Articles themselves : whereas what we hold is, that it only obliges us to Affent they came from Chrift, or were inerrably deliver'd down by the Churche's Testimony. Fourthly, By leaving out all mention of what's most particularly our Tenet in this Point, he puts it upon us to hold that Human Authority has effect upon Human Nature of it felf; whereas we never prefum'd or affirm'd it either had or ought to have any but by Vertue of the Reasons which youch't for its Veracity, nay, I both Affirm'd and Prov'd the direct Contrary. His Third Conclusion is, Seeing all its Credit depends on its Intrinsical Reasons produc't, till they be produc't we are not bound to give any Credit to it. No, nor bound to mind them much it feems, nor Answer them fully when product; as appears by his omitting the most forcible Reasons for the Certainty of Tradition's Continuance as was Lately shown. But why is this made a diffinct Conclusion or disjoynted from the reft, whereas it was the most necesfary and Estential parcof our true Tenet? Because the Method he so Religiously observed throughout his Dialogue-Answer, which is to matter afunder the intire Sonfe of every passage, would not allow it. His Fourth Conclusion is, When these Reasons shall be produc't, its Te-Rimony has but the Nature of an External Motive, not of an Intrinsical Ground. Answ. Intrinsical Ground? To what? To Christian Faith as 'tis Dinine? 'Twas never presended, nor can it belong in any regard to our Question, since 'tisnot differted between us, but Acknowledg'd by us both, that Chriff's Doftrin is such Means he then'tis not a Proper Medium to prove Christ's Faith deriv'd to us who live non? How can be even presend to shew that so vast a Testimony is not proper to Attest a Notorious Matter of Fall viz. what Doffrin was Delever'd immediately before, and this throughout every Age, Year, or Day? Again, what means he when he lays, Teltimony is not un Intrinsicall Ground?

Ground? What man in his fenfes ever Taid or thought it? We spoke indeed of Intrinsicall Grounds to prove the Credibleness of that Testimony, but not a word have we even hinting that Testimony it felf is an Intrinsical Ground to any thing. If he will needs be talking Nonfense let him take it to himself, and norput it upon me. Lastly, why is not an Extrinsical Ground or Testimony prov'd to be fuch by Intrinsical Reasons sufficient in our case? This Thould have been shewn, but for this very reason 'tis not To much as taken notice of either by him or his Mafter. In a word, he uses some of our words, taken a funder from the Context of our intire sense; then blends them confuledly together on any fashion, without any kind of order or respect to the true Question; he gives us Relative words without telling us what they relate to ; he puts upon us Tenets we never advanc't or held, but the direct Contrary. And the witty Gentleman would still perfuade his Reader he is Repeating his Leffon I have Taught him. when as all the while he deferves more then a Ferula for his rehearling it wrong, or rather faying it Backwards. Then follows his Grand Conclusion as the Flower of all the foregoing ones, which we may be fure hits the Point Exactly ; And therefore (fays he) either your Pofition overthrows your Churche's Authority, or It your Position, Most Excellent? My Position is about Tradition which is the Self fame thing with the Churche's Authority; and this precious Scribbler will needs have the fame thing to destroy it self. A fit Upshot for Discourse without sence.

89. We see by this one Instance there is scarce one Line, nor many Significant Words in this half-page of his, but runs upon Enormous Mistakes. And, does he think I have nothing else to do but to stand Restifying still what he all along takes such Care and Pains to put into Disorder. Especially, since those sew things that are pertinent, are abundantly spoketo in my Third Carbolick Letter.

Letter, and this present Reply. I must intreat the Dr to excuse me if I have no mind to break his Young Controvertists, and teach them how to Manage. Mr G. did him, I hope, no disparagement in making me his Substitute; but 'tis not so gentile in him to set such a Fresh Man upon my back. I'le have nothing to do with his little Fourney-Men or Apprentices till the World be satisfy'd that their Master himself is a better Artist. And, if it shall appear that even the Learned Dr St. is able to make nothing of so bad a Cause, 'tis neither Discreditable to me nor any Disadvantage to the Truth I am desending, if I neglect such a Sixth-rate Writer who consesses himself anworthy to carry bis Books after him.

90. The Omissions in answering my Second Catholick Letter are as many as that Letter it self contains: since his untoward Method renders all his Talk, Twitching and Girding at little sayings of mine, utterly insignificant. Whence, that whole Treatise as 'the in it felf, stands yet Intire, unless the Dr can shew by his new Logick that to minee balf a Book into Fragments is to Answer the Whole.

Cath Letter. But his Omissions in Answering my Second Cath Letter. But his Omissions in Answering the Third are both numerous and most highly Important, and he is to render an Account of all this long Roll of his Neglects. Why did he not clear himself of his altering there the Notion of Tradition into Articles and Powers of doing this or that, shewn at large, p. 4.5. Why answers he not the several Reasons, proving against him, that Tradition brings down the Sense of Christ's Dostrin, and not only Common Words; in the Clear Delivery of which Sense consists one of the main Properties of a Rule, viz. its Plainmess to People of all forts who are to be regulated by it? And why, instead of performing this necessary Duty, does he (p. 42.) after having vapour'd that Tis bravely said if it evals be made out, does he not so much as mention

* Third Cath. Letter, from p. 4.5.

P. 2.

P. 5. 6. 7.

the Reasons by which it was made out; but ramble into fuch Nonfense (p. 43.) that He and his Party (who are Deferters of Tradition) cannot mistake it; that Tradition (or the Church'es Human Testimony) being the Rule of Faith is a part of Christ's Doctrin, &c. Why no Excuse for his deforming the meaning of that plain word [Tradition] into many unfutable Significations, and putting it in all shapes but its own? Why no Defence of his most P. 11.19 ridiculous Drollery, in paralleling Tradition or the Testimony of God's Church to the Relation of two or three partial Witnesses of his own side in favour of their fellows? Or for his Inconfonancy to himfelf & his Infincerity in thus perverting it still when he was to impugnit; whenas he took it very right when it made for himself? Why not a word to my Clearest Demonstration, that 'tis impossible P. 12. 14.15 but Tradition must bring down a Determinate Sense of the Tenets it delivers, which he answers not at all, but only brings against Conclusion an Instance of the Cortathians and Arlemonites (p. 45. 46.) which as far as it pretends they pleaded Tradition for their Herely, (taking Tradition as we do for the Immediate Testimony of the Church) is both Halfe and Senfeless. Why no Answer at all to that most Concerning Point provid against him, that the Church has Power to declare diverse Propositions to be of Faith, not held distinctly before, without any prejudice stall to Tradition? And why no notice taken of my most Evident Proof that we make Christian Faith as 'tis Formally Divine rely on the Divine Authority, notwithstanding our Tenet, that the Church'es Humane Authority is the Means to bring us to the knowledge of Chrife's Doctrin; and that the afferting this Later is not to overthrow the Church'es Authority in matters of Faith, as he objected? As also that the Venerable F. W. was not an Adversary to our way, and that Lominus his Book the Dr rely'd on was no Argument that my Doarin

P. TO 23. 21. Grin was faulty even in the opinion of my Judges; Why gave he no reply to any of thefe, but fiell rum on with his former Calumnies, as if nothing had been produc't to

P. 22. 23. 24 Thew his manifest and Wilfull Mistakes? Why no An-2 35 36. 27. fwer to my Reasons proving at large the impotency of his malice in charging Peligianifm, more than to repeat a few of words for a flew, that this Homene Authority

p. 24.

P. 26.

27 BI 21

leads us to what's Divine, and there ftopping; whereas the Cath. Letter very * next words [Zet not by its own force but by versue of the Suppolition agreed apon that Christ's Dottrin is fach I had spoil'dall his presence? Why no notice taken of my Citation out of Errow Nomblust writ against himself fifteen vearsago; which forestall dall his rambling Mistakes, and by confequence, flew'd him strangely Infincere, in diffembling his knowledge of my Tenet fo expressly de-

P. 28. clar'd.

92. Why no Pica alledg'd to justify his shuffle from the Grounds of his Protestant Raith in parsicular to the Grounds of Christian Faith in Common; nor to excuse his next Shuffle, and Norfenie to boot, in making [Faith] by vertue of an id off, to fignify the Grounds for his Ground of Fuith; and turning Certainty of Scripture Jinto a long ramble, wis. into [Corrainty of the Grounds on which we believe Scripture to commun the word of God.] Why not a word of Reply to my Difcourfes, there and in many other places, flewing that Scripture's Containing Faith is nothing at all to our purpose; but the Gerring out from Scripture it's true Mouning or Senfe, this only being our Paich; and that his Faith is fill Oucertain unless there be Certainty that fuch and fuch Articles are Contain'd there. Which Point tho' it be of the Highest Consequence, yet he never fets himfelf to salve our Arguments against it, in his whole pretended Answer! but herons on Aill in the fame Errour, as if nothing had been at ledged to Thew his Difcourfes inlignificant and frivologs! Why

P. 30. 31.

P. 33.

no Answer to my Discourse proving that a Rule or Ground is none, if it carry not thorough to the particular Points, especially to those which are most Fundamentall, unless granting it in effect (p. 36., and allowing no sholute Certainty to any particular Point of Faith, may be called an Answer? Why no Excuse for his Skewing Comment upon his own Answer (which spoke of Absolute Certainty of all Christ's Doctrin, which consists of such and fuch particular Tenets) to the Writings of the Apofles ; whereas there was not a word of Writing in Mr. G's Question or in his own Answer either? Nor any notice P. 32.33. taken of my Argument, manifesting that a Refolution of Faith Speaks Connexion of the Motives that are to prove it Christ's Doctrin, to the Paints of Faith; laid home to him in a Close Discourse demonstrating the Necessary it should be fuch. Why no Account of his distinguishing between Christ's Doctrin and that of the Apostles; that to he might mif-represent Tradition, and alter the Queftion from a Publick to a Private Delivery? Why no Reason given of his not Resolving his Faith into the A- P. 34 35. postles Preaching, but only into their Writing; I mean, no Answer to my Reasons why he ought to have resolv'd it into the former, at least, Equally? Why no Answer to my Reasons, shewing from his ill-laid Principles, that Perfect Contradictories, Points of Feith and wicked Hereffes, opposit to them, are both Equelly Certain? Why P. 36. 37. no Excuse for his Shuffling from the Men Tellament's Containing af the Divine Revelations, to the Church'es making men fix by degrees upon the Certain Canon of it, which is there from (and indeed appears of it felf) to be a quite disparate business? Why not the least Excuse for his most abominable four-fold Prevarication in answering to one 1.37.38.39. fingle Question, expos'd there at large; and why no 40. Defence or particular Explication of his beloved Sufficient Certainty por any Application of it to the Nature, Ends,

P. 42. 43. 44. 45.

P. 48. 49.

and Ufes of a firm Faith, that any Point is Chrift's true Doctrin, shewing that his feeble Motives are sufficient for those particular purposes? Why, to make his odd Similitude of Scripture's being a Parfe, appolit, does he not bew us some Certain Way, how the Gold and Silver Points of Faith (as he calls them) may be got out of it, without danger of extracting thence the impure Drofs of Errour and Herefy instead of True Faith? Again, to make it fquare, why does he not rather make the Heads and Hearts of the First Faithfull the Parles, since (as was fhewn him) Faith is more properly Contain'd there than in P. 45. 45. 47. a Book? Or, if he will needs make use of an Improper Container of Faith too, why does not he put two Purses: viz. the Souls of the Faithfull, and the Scripture? And why not a word of Reply to my Plain Reasons why he ought to have done both these? Why no Answer to my Reafons proving that All the Points of Faith are Necessary for the Salvation of Mankind, and for the Church; otherwise than by rambling to Transubstantiation (p. 84.) and that he fees no Necessity of it. Which makes his often-alledg'd Distinction of Necessary & Unnecessary Points, Brought to avoid the Question, perfectly frivolous; and why funs he still on with the same Distinction in this pretended Answer without taking off the Exceptions against it. by only crying Mai for him! when I askt him, If Christ tanght any unnecessary Arriveles: and by saying they are not equally Necessary, p. 33. Why nothing to justify that his Affect of Parth may not be Falle, and lo, no Faith? Why no Reply to my Reasons, that, notwithstanding his pretended Grounds, He has no Absolute Certainty that even the Letter of Scripture is Right; whereas, if it be not, he can have no Certainty but all is Wrong that is grounded upon it 4 fince, in that case he may embrace a Grand Herefy for True Faith? Why no Answer to my plainest Argument, thewing how Christ's Doctrin, continu'd all a-

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(169)

long in the Breast of the Church, is the best Means to corred the Letter in Texts that contain Faith? Why no P. 53.54-55. Reply to my many Reasons, shewing that the Ancient 36. Church allow'd our way of Tradition, and disallow'd his of Scripture privately Interpreted? Why does he not confute my Discourses, manifesting that he can have no Ab-Solute Certainty by his Principles of the Number of Books: or of each Chapter, Verfe, and Material Word in each Verfe that concerns any Point of Faith; without doing which, he cannot pretend to have Certainty of the Letter, nor, confequently, of any one of those Points? Why no P. 58.59. Reply to that Important Objection, that if Scripture were the Rule of Faith, the Primitive Church had, for some time, but half or three-quarters of their Faith, or less, (and so, by his Principles, were but threequarters or half Christians) according as the several pieces came by degrees to be spread, accepted, or univerfally acknowledg'd; nay perhaps no Faith at all, as was there shewn; and why did, he instead of replying, *turn it off to the fingle Bpiftle to the Hebrews, and to an Infignificant #? Why, when it was objected that divers of his Christian Churches doubted of divers Books of Scripture, and some late Brethren of his of some others. does he again turn it off (as to the former) to the Canon of Scripture made afterwards; and to the later favs nothing? Why not a word to my Clearest Proof that our Tradition or Testimony for Destrinis incomparably more large in its fource, which gives it its chief force, than bis is for Scripture's Letter? Why does he not clear himself of his preserring his Sober Enquirer before the P. 61. 62. 23; Church, the unreasonableness of which was urg'd home against him, nor justify his weak discourses in some sleigter paffages laid open, p.64.65. Why not a fyllable of Anfwer to that mest highly-concerning Discourse, and which, if it stands in its full force, overthrows all the whole

P. 56.

*See above \$.

P. 99.

P. 60.

whole Fabrick of his Doftrin, viz. that a Rule or Ground are Relative Words, and therefore Scriptures Letter 1. 53 - 10. 55 cannot be an Absolute Certain Rule on Ground, unless its Ascertaining virtue affects the Articles known by it? P. 65. 57. 68. This Point has been prest upon him to vigorously, and pursu'd with so many forcible Arguments that there can be no plainer Confession that his Cause is lost than not to attempt to answer them; especially, since the binge of the whole Controverly depends upon it. It was his Concern too to avow or disavow his dear Friend Dr. Burnet's Position, making his Sober Enquirer judge of Councils; but he would not be fo candid. Why declines he the giving us fatisfaction that he does indeed hold the Testimony for Scripture Absolutely Certain, by making out from the Nature of the Things, why it must P.71.72.73. be for See, Reader, how it was there demanded of him and urg'd upon him to do himself and his Faith that Honour and Credit; Yet he is perfectly deafto all follicitations of that kind. And the Reason is because, should should he do this as he ought to do, he must necessarily make the Church Infallible, and rely upon her Infallibility for the Certainty of Seriptures Letter; and should it come to be prov'd that 'tis eafier to transmit down the Tame Doctrin than an Ewall Copy, this would oblige his Sober Enquirer to be led by her in masters of Faith. A condescendence not to be submitted to by his Fanatick Friends; both because their First Principle is to think themselves wifer than the Church; as also because to prove this would make the Knowledge of Christ's Doctrin tooffrong by Proofs and Outmerd Means, which their Oifsed and Infair d Genius (impossible ever to be provid but by doing Miracles) cannot away with. To proceed, Why clears he not himself from being oblig'd by his Principles to

own a Brotherhood with all Hereticks who profels to tollow Scripture as much as he does; by shewing some Ab-

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P. 75.

69. 70.71.

74.

Tolutely Certain Means to diftinguish his Faith from theirs; Did not the doing this mainly concern his Credit, when it was severely objected, and bennthat he had given inf occasion for this Suspition of all-comprehending Principles ? Why no Account given of the Absolute Certain. ty of Particular Texts, and the most significant Words in each of them, as well as of the Canon or Number of Books; without which, let the Canon be as Certain as it will. tis impossible for him to know affuredly whether what he holds be True Faith or Herefy? Why no Answer to my Objection that to be the Word of God is not fufficient to make Scripture a Rule, unless it bas withall Perspicuity or Clearness, to give those who read it and rely on it, Ab-Solute Certainty of its true Sense, or Faith, in those high Mysteries and Spiritual Points controverted between the Church and her Deferters? Why no Reply to my Con. P. 78.79.80. futation of his fmartel or rather Only Argument to prove Scripture a Rule, given by me particularly to every Branch of it? Is not a business of such high Confequence worth his Defence, his whole Caule, (as far as tis manag'd by him) francing or falling by his maintaining or deferring that main Proof for it? Why does he give us no Grounds that elevate Faith (as it depends on the Rule afcertaining us it came from Christ) above Opinion; whenas it was charg'd P. 81. 82 upon him that he had no fuch Grounds, and he was loudly call'd upon to produce them; but to aggravate the fault to call here plan all the Points of Christian Faith (there spoken of) Particular opinions? Why takes he no notice of the feveral Senfes of the word Rule] and in which P. 83. 83. of those Senses it is taken properly, and why it must necellarity be taken in fuch a Sense in our Controversy; but instead of doing this, run on wilfully miffaking it still? Why not a word in Confutation of an Infallable Judge, as P. 84. 87. that Point is flated by me? Why did he not accept my Challenge that he could not Thew me any one Solid Proof

P. 77.

in his whole Treatife that he could maintain ; fince the doing this had been a great Blurr to me, and a high Credit to himself; nay the very offering at it; might have kept our Readers in some Sufpence whether he were perfectly baffled or no, whenas his total declining it is a plana Confession he does not think fit to stand to any one Proof P.86.87.88. he has produc't? Why no Reply to my Discourse demonstrating that a Rule must be the Immediate Light to know the Thing in order to which 'tis to regulate us; and, therefore, that, however he pretends to Scripture, vet his own Interpretation, or the Means he uses to Interpret it, is unavoidably his Rule? As also that the Testimony of all Christian Churches did not recommend to him fach a Rule of Faith; and that a Testimony for the Letter confess'd by himself to be Eallible, stood in great need of his Logick to make what's built on it to be Abjo-Istely Certain? Why not a word to the Testimony of that Antient and Holy Father, and most Solid Controvertiff, St. Abenafine; which quite overthrows the whole Scheme of his Dodrin, and makes all his Sober Enquirers tinte lievers or Infidels? And why no Excuse fushis not put ting amongst his Helps the Judgment of the present Church at least of the Church of England; (this being both an eaher Help than 'tis to use his other painfull Methods to understand Scripture right, & more agreeable to the Order of the world.) especially, since he stands impeache of destroying Church-Government as to any thing belonging to Faith? Why does not he shew us how Mr T. could be a Sober Enquirer, whom he defends for fo fuddenly fettling his Enquiry and Refolving, tho' he did not use those Means which the Dr himself affirm'd his Sober Enquirers were bound to ale; especially, since this carriage of the Dr's flews him very willing to contradict at pleasure even his own Principles, and to dispense with those Obligations he himself had impos'd, when

P. 89. 907

P. 00 01.

is fuits with his Interest? Whence every considering man must necessarily conclude he holds not heartily and P. 93.94. fleadily to any Principle at all. Why should not his Sober Enquirers truft the Church rather than themselves; and why no Aufwer to the Reafons why they should? Why does not he confute my Discourse, proving that a P. 95. 95. 97. Judge proceeding upon an Inerrable Rule is Infallable; 98. and that 'tis no prejudice to the Church, that those whom The has cast out, or are her Enemies, dony her to be such? Why answers he not my Particular Reasons against bis P. 90, 100. kind of Judgment of Discretion, or the Reasons given 101.102,103. for ours, but makes impertinent Discourses of his own at random, without regarding either our Objections, or our Proofs; nay, when he bad occasion, without acknowledging their Distinction, but most unconscionably pretending them to be the fame; whereas their Difference and perfect Opposition to one another, is laid out there very largely and particularly.

And now, Gentlemen, I request even thase who are the most Partial of his Friends to count over the Pages cited in the Margent; and, if you find by an exact Review that I have neither mifreeken'd them, nor mifrepresented his Answers; be pleas'd to frame thence an Impartial Indement of his protigious Confidence in pretending in his Title that this every way-Defective Treatife is, In Anfiver to my Catholick Letters; whereas he has given no An-Iwer at all (to fpeak with the least) to the Fortieth Part of them; and, as for that small inconfiderable pittance he has attempted to reply to, it has been shewn you by detail, with what incredible Weakness or worse, he has perform'd it. Lintreat you also to reflect that the passages he has left unanswer'd, are not Trivial or Sleight ones; but all of them, Pertinent; almost all of them, Substantial; and, by far the greater part, of vall Import; as coming up close to our main Point, the Absolute Certainty of Chri-

P. 70.

(tian Faith, (that is, as to its having been taught by Chrift.) by our respective Frinciples. So that, in case They, and the Reasons for them, be left standing in their full force, as they yet fland, his whole Cause is utterly loft: and himself convinc'd not only to be no Good Defender of Christian Faith, but withall no Steady Holder that his Faith is truly Thrillian, or derived from Chrift; Or, if he holds it to be fuch at all, it must be by Emthusiasm, or Fanatick Inspiration, not upon truly Rational or (which is the fame) Conclusive Grounds. He will say perhaps he has touch't upon some of those Particulars: nay, now and then, made long Discourses against diverse of my Positions. But, all this he might have done tho' he had had never an Adversary. To answer is to Solbe the Arguments of another, not to find fault with his Conclusions and make Discourses on his own head; a Method which any Judicious Reader may observe runs thorough his whole Book. Whence I am not ty'd to Reply to fuch Impertinent and Irregular Prevarications: but only to defend and stand by my Reasons; and 'tis a Courreous Condescendence, not a Right due to his Carriage, that I have reply d to them at all; fince my Arguments, according to the Laws of Disputation, must be granted to fland firm 'till they be oversbrown, Yet, notwithstanding I was not oblig'd to humour his Illogical Proceedings, I do norknow of any thing that is Pertinent and of Moment that I have over past; and I could have spoke it with more affuredness, had he quoted the Pages in my Letters all along as I did in him, especially when I cited him; but he would not expose himself to that disadvantage, lest the Reader should by that means be directed ffill to my Discourses themselves; and comparing them with what he had laid to them, fee how Frigid, Indirect. or utterly Infignificant his pretended Answers were. The I fay I know of no fuch passage omitted, but what has been already reply'd to and forestall'd in my former Letters, or in Errour Bonplut, vet, in case he ftill contends I have, let him fingle out those which he judges the strongest, or any page in this Answer of his own which concerns the Certainty of Faith as we treat of it, that is of Christ's Doctrin as 'tis Knowable by us at this distance from his time, and I do promise him a very punctual Reply to each particular Passage, one by one. He would much oblige our Readers and mee too, if instead of Answering he will needs fall to Arguing, he would please to pick out what's most Pertinent and Weighty, and let each fingle Point be debated apart. This would give a far Clearer Light to our Readers: And for their fakes, if he will not do this himfelf, I shall (as my leifure ferves) do it for him. In the mean time I am to demand of him publickly as my Right, both a punctual Reply to the long Roll of these his important Omissions, and also a Defence of his Trifling Performances: And, in case he demos to give me and the World that Satisfaction, fine-nous who knows him can think be wants Wit and Parts to do it, if feifible, it must necessarily be concluded his Canse wants Truth.

Your Well wishing Friend and Servant in Christ,

J.S.

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